Corrigenda

"reading intertextually: art, fiction, and material culture in Patrick White and Sidney Nolan"

Hollingdrake, Philips, Scanlan, Stowe and Whitely are mis-spelt throughout this thesis and should be spelt "Hollingrake", "Phillips", "Scanlon", "Stow" and "Whiteley" respectively.

Line numbers denote those included in the body of the text and do not take account of the line numbers in epigraphs, quotations, or captions which are signified separately.

Volume 1

page 32, line 8: *Lightning Field* (for *Lighting Field*).

page 37, line 9: World Wide Web (for world-wide web).

page 41, line 18: intertexts: that (for intertexts, that).

page 52, caption figure 13: Routledge (for E&S).

page 53, line 5: Whiteley.[6] (for Whitely.).

page 53, line 9: Australia. (for Australia.[6]).

page 54, line 10: Routledge (for E&S).

page 67, line 11: Robyn (for Robin).

page 67, line 18 Robyn (for Robin).

page 68, line 1: Robyn (for Robin).

page 73, line 7: suggest the wearer (for suggest wearer).

page 74, fig. 22, caption: Ringwood (for Harmondsworth).

page 79, 2nd quotation, line 15: 315, 317 (for 317).

page 86, line 10: Postmodernist (for Postmodernism).

page 108, lines 5-6: In Australia many convicts have looked (for Australia was full of transported convicts who looked).

page 109, line 23: tortuous (for torturous).

page 133[22], line 4: Australia (for Australian).

page 171, fig. 22, caption: Ringwood (for Harmondsworth).

page 178, line 16: if "it will (for "if it will).

page 201, line 4: distinction (for evaluation).

page 207[2], lines 1-2: Feuerbach (for Feuerback).

Diane Caney
(15.8.1997)

reading intertextually:

art, fiction, and material culture

in Patrick White and Sidney Nolan

by

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Volume I

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Department of English
University of Tasmania
December, 1996

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other higher degree or graduate diploma in any tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis or in the footnotes.

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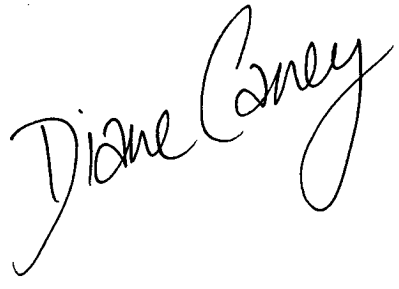

Φορ Σιδ,

Ελσιε ανδ Φισχηερ

abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore how it is that texts intertext; and how that intertextuality is affected by various aspects of textual production: both that which relates to the material and cultural productions of texts, and that which relates to readerly constructions of textuality and intertextuality. It also explores the implications of reading intertextually: the sorts of readings that can be made, as well as how reading intertextually can inform the ways in which we then create new texts of material production. The various processes by which we create intertextual texts means that boundaries of textual medium and genre are being continually dissolved and re-established. I examine the implications of the erosions of barriers that have been used traditionally to separate various aspects of textuality, and I investigate the sorts of boundaries that are enabled by intertextuality.

As well as exploring the broad meaning of the words *reading*, *text*, and *intertext*, I also read specific ways in which the works of Patrick White and Sidney Nolan intertext, exploring the slippages of meaning and perception that are caused by the intertextuality of a variety of their texts. I investigate the ways in which their works intertext with other art, with other writings, and with the wider contexts of Australian and global culture. Some broader questions relating to textuality and intertextuality are given close attention in the introduction, as are the terms and reading strategies used in the thesis. The four main sections of the thesis are *i) translation rights*, *ii) disrupting texts*, *iii) flux*, and *iv) deterritorialisation.*

Translation rights begins with an analysis of the positions of White and Nolan within Australian culture, after which I read intertextually White's novels *Riders in the Chariot* and *Voss*, and Nolan's art, also observing ways in which those texts intertext with various notions of national identity and historico-mythography. Each of the other three sections begins with a different meditation on the nature of textuality and intertextuality, in which I propose a variety of ways in which the activity of reading intertextually might be mapped. These sections also include specific intertextual readings of the works of White and Nolan. I do not attempt to retrieve "objective" meanings from the texts of White and Nolan, rather I acknowledge my readings as

subjective and transient, arguing that texts exist in a state of flux during acts of reading, as they intertext with various other entities involved in signic play, including: myself as reader, other readers, (inter)texts, and the complex cultural codings in which textual play takes place.

Disrupting texts includes a discussion of written epigraphs and the ways in which cover-illustrations (and other visual texts) can be read as visual epigraphs. This section also studies how theories of *livres d'artistes* intertext with literary theory. In *flux*, I adapt the graphics of semiotics in order to more adequately map the activity of reading intertextually; and then explore the intertextuality at work between Nolan's *Eliza Fraser* series and White's *A Fringe of Leaves*. *Deterritorialisation* investigates the ways in which intertextuality causes the deterritorialisation of all texts; before presenting a series of intertextual readings of the works of both White and Nolan with the poetry of Rimbaud. I conclude by exploring the implications of the (inter)textual play enabled as art, fiction, and material culture (and the discursive practices with which they are surrounded) are read intertextually.

DECLARATION

This thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of diagrams, figures, and bibliography.

Thanks are extended to my supervisor Dr Philip Mead for his encouragement, his calm and his excellent advice; to Professor David Lawton who assisted me during the interim stages of this work, and who encouraged me to make this an interdisciplinary project; and to Mr Sandy Porteous, who helped me during the first year of this study. I would also like to thank Dr Ruth Blair, Dr Rose Gaby, Dr Jennifer Livett, Dr Jenna Mead, Dr Felicity Plunkett and Mr John Winter for their encouragement and intellectual input into this thesis.

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**Figure numbers are given in the body of this text (next to the titles), for all the illustrations provided in this thesis. A complete list of both the illustrations reproduced, and the full details of images that are discussed (but not reproduced in this document), can be found on page 409 of Volume II. Figures 1-99 are reproduced in Volume I and figures 100-218 are reproduced in Volume II. Unless otherwise stated, the visual works of art described in this thesis are those of Sidney Nolan.*

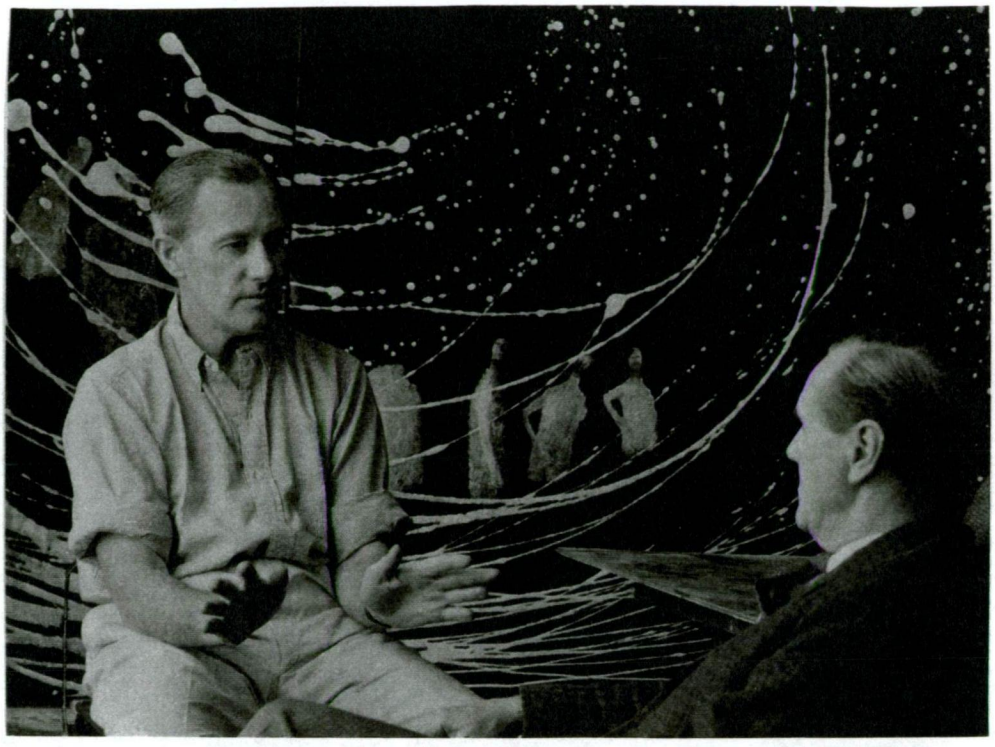
Works by Patrick White
AFL – A Fringe of Leaves
FG – Flaws in the Glass
MMO – Memoirs of Many in One
PWS – Patrick White Speaks
RC – Riders in the Chariot
TAS – The Aunt's Story
TBO – The Burnt Ones
TC – The Cockatoos
TES – The Eye of the Storm
TTA – The Twyborn Affair
TTM – The Tree of Man
TV – The Vivisector

Critical and other works
AA – Art and Australia
AL – Australian Letters
ALS – Australian Literary Studies
AP – Marianne Ryan, ed., *Angry Penguins and realist painting in Melbourne in the 1940s*
AT – Christopher Uhl, ed., *Albert Tucker*
BW – Tim Bonyhady, ed., *Burke and Wills: from Melbourne to Myth*
BWAL – Barry Pearce, ed., *Brett Whitely: Art and Life*
DMT – Dictionary of Modern Thought
FIHM – Albert Tucker, *Faces I Have Met*
Letters – David Marr, ed., *Patrick White: Letters*
N – Jane Clark, ed., *Nolan: Myths, Landscapes and Portraits, 1942-64*
NG – Gavin Fry, ed., *Nolan's Gallipoli*
NL – Maggie Gilchrist, ed., *Nolan at Lanyon*
NSS – New Statesman and Society
OED – Oxford English Dictionary
PW – David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life*
RDM – Heather Johnson, ed., *Roy De Maistre: the Australian Years 1894 - 1930*
Redon – André Mellerio, ed., *[The Works of] Odilon Redon*
Rimbaud – Refers to the edition from which, unless otherwise indicated, all poems cited are taken: Wallace Fowlie, trans. & ed., *Rimbaud: Complete Works, Selected Letters*
RP – David Haese, ed., *Rebels and Precursors*
Shock – Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New*
SMH – Sydney Morning Herald
SN – Kenneth Clark, Colin MacInnes, & Bryan Robertson, eds., *Sidney Nolan*
SNA – Elwyn Lynn, ed., *Sidney Nolan, Australia*
SND – Andrew Sayers, ed., *Sidney Nolan Drawings*
SNI – Elwyn Lynn, ed., *Sidney Nolan: Illuminations*
SNLL – Jane Clark, ed., *Sidney Nolan: Landscapes and Legends*
SNMI – Elwyn Lynn, ed., *Sidney Nolan: Myth and Imagery*
SNNK – Elwyn Lynn, ed., *Sidney Nolan's Ned Kelly*
SNSIL – Brian Adams, *Sidney Nolan: Such is Life*
Surrealism – Michael Lloyd, Ted Gott & Christopher Chapman, eds., *Surrealism: Revolution by Night*

Art galleries, museums, publishers
AGNSW – Art Gallery of New South Wales
ANG – Australian National Gallery, Canberra
AWM – Australian War Memorial, Canberra
E&S – Eyre and Spottiswoode, publishers
Heide – Heide Park and Art Gallery, Bulleen, Victoria
Lanyon – The Nolan Gallery at Lanyon, ACT
MOMA – Museum of Modern Art, New York
NGV – National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne
QAG – Queensland Art Gallery
UWA – University of Western Australia

Where is the politician who will flower like the *leptospermum citrata,*
Who will sound like the surf out of the Antarctic,
Who has in his hands the knots of coolibah,
And in his soul the tears of migrants landing from Piraeus?

Patrick White,
"Nine Thoughts from Sydney"



Sidney Nolan with Patrick White (seated in front of *The Galaxy*, 1957-58), photograph Axel Poignant, c. 1963 (fig. 1).

I had a boat and poet
with wings, and on his head
was red lead,
the river ran between his eyes;
and in his hands were trees.

I had a hill and night
with frost and on the moon
was mist,
the valley held an angel;
and in his hands were trees.

I had an air and water–
wheel and all beside
a waterfall,
the ferns were slim and tall;
and in his hands were trees.

Tell you sister, tell you
lovers three, the poet had
wings, the boat had wings,
singing ever of here and now;
and in his hands were trees.

Sidney Nolan

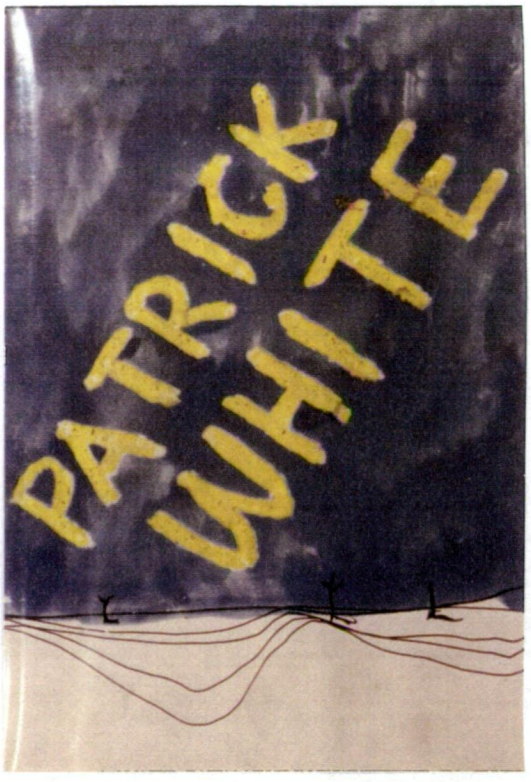
I feel an affinity with all those who do not deny
the existence of mysteries that beat in the breast
of the world.
What I do not understand,
I respect ...

Hélène Cixous

prologue 1

This study is an exploration of the process of reading intertextually
in which I make maps, creative intertextual illustrations,
and inter-imagic readings of both that process
and the (inter)texts I read.

I impose limits upon the (inter)textual areas investigated in this exploration,
but those limits are acknowledged as arbitrary because I see
(inter)textuality as a limitless entity that can be described
in myriad ways and that can only ever be known
as fragments of vastness.



Back cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on dust-jacket of *Voss*, E&S, London: 1957 (fig. 2).

> We are witnessing today the exhaustion and the ossification of all established vocabularies, of all languages, of all styles ... [W]e propose instead ... [t]he passionate adventure of the real perceived in itself and not through the prism of conceptual or imaginative transcription.
>
> Pierre Restany[1]

> [T]here is truth in Robert Motherwell's statement that "every intelligent painter carries the whole culture of modern painting in his head." But art does not always derive from art. Artists draw sustenance from everywhere: from the totality – moral, intellectual, and temporal as well as physical and sensory – of their environment and experience.
>
> William C. Seitz

prologue II

Restany proposes that the real be perceived in itself and not through the prism of text (711). Motherwell asserts that, without suspension of knowledge, this desire is impossible because all human beings carry texts in their persons, through which both reality and art are mediated (Seitz 72). As all texts are (inter)texts, interplay between signifiers (of every kind) and signifieds, is a potentially endless medley of (inter)textual assemblages that occurs on innumerable readerly platforms. I use the words, *text*, *intertext* and *reading*, to describe the widest possible array of potential meanings for those words, given that I am exploring the intertextuality (and inter-imaging) of words and images, and given that I want the word *reading* to be a

description of every possible form of interaction with every possible variety of text.[2] Seitz returns us to the world that is "reality," but reality in all its forms, that which derives from texts of material production, and that which does not (72). If readers endow anything in their universe with significance, those things are, for them, signifiers, transmitters of messages, texts. As such, everything has the potential to be perceived as signifier, as text.

Relating to visual art as *text* can foreground ideas conventionally associated with verbal language. The word *text* implies that meaning is the primary sort of signified intended. I argue, however, that any kind of signified may be ascribed to any signifier. This does not mean that what happens in one signifying medium can be exactly replicated in another. The picture of a pipe, an actual pipe, and the word *pipe*, may all, theoretically, convey the same message, but the complex process by which we read, means that reading any of those signifiers will result in an intertextual medley of signifieds in various forms. By describing signifying sites as texts, then, I don't intend to privilege the act of reading over other forms of interacting with texts. *Text* denotes anything that is capable of transmitting a message, or anything that can be interpreted by a reader/viewer as a signifying site; the message (transmitted or received) need not involve rational meaning. An image, or a word, may be apprehended: as an image; as a signifier that exists solely to emit meaning; as an image that evokes emotion and/or meaning (as well as resonating with image); and/or as other combinations of messages, including the provocation of taste, smell, or physical sensation. Nolan's depiction of the letters of Patrick White's name, and the novel's title, on the dust-jacket of the E&S first edition of *Voss* (figs. 3 & 4), might easily convey the remembrance of images and smells related to smoke-signals, aeroplane exhaust emissions, and/or bush-fire smoke. Any signifier will be affected by whatever myriad (or absence) of intertexts and inter-images that are brought to it by readers.[3]

The word *intertextuality* can be used to describe the invitation, in a text of material production, to read the enmeshment of two or more texts. It can also be used to describe aspects of what we call reality. The spaces in which we live comprise a

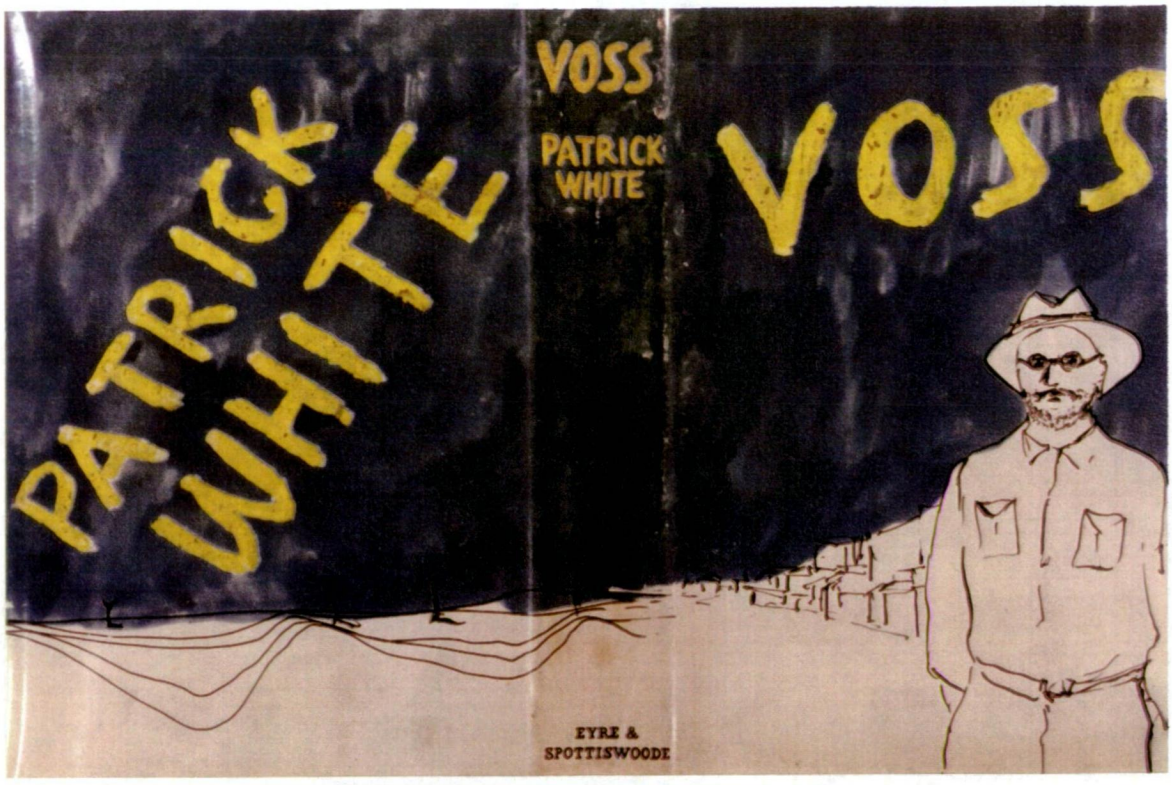
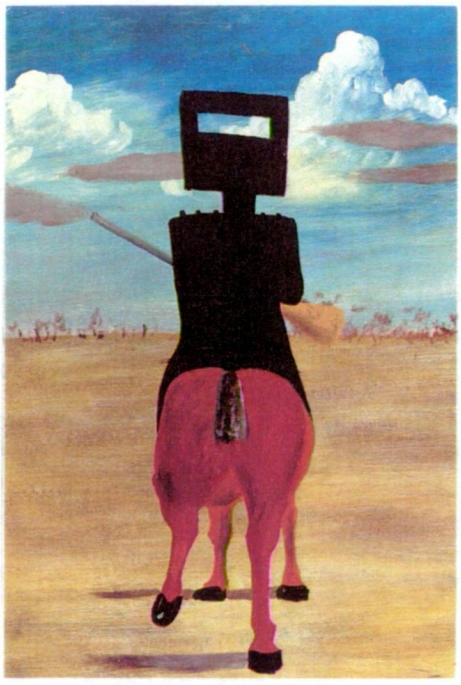


Figure 3 – Credited to Sidney Nolan, cover illustration for E&S edition of *Voss*, London: 1957 (dust-jacket opened out).

Figure 4 – Credited to Sidney Nolan, cover illustration for E&S edition of *Voss*, London: 1957 (viewed from front-cover only).

vast array of texts (whatever their textual media). For any intertextuality (as with any textuality) to be drawn into the reading process, however, there must be creative interaction between (inter)texts and readers. The absent texts to which any intertext might allude can only permeate any new text through imaginary play during the reading process.[4] The inter-mingling, particularly of intertexts in differing media, occurs on the stages, or virtual realities, of our minds.[5] Readerly spaces comprise vast textual worlds that are accessed during the process of reading. The construction of readerly intertextuality, however, does not usually take place without initial readerly interaction with material texts, whatever the medium of those texts. The process of reading, once commenced, is potentially endless, involving the complex inter-relationships between readers, signifiers (texts and intertexts), and readings of those signifiers (signifieds). In this study, I endeavour to remain aware of the shifting nature of cultural codings (and the constantly evolving ways in which we are able to read texts today), in order to account for the myriad transactions that can take place during acts of reading. I make maps rather than define truths about the relationships between texts, intertexts and readers; recognising that as the body of this study intertexts with readers and with other texts, those maps will continually modify.



Kelly, 1946 (detail, fig. 46).

> It seems a strange thing, when one comes to ponder over it, that a sign should leave its interpreter to supply a part of its meaning; but the explanation of the phenomenon lies in the fact that the entire universe – not merely the universe of existents, but all that wider universe, embracing the universe of existents as a part ... is perfused with signs, if it is not composed exclusively of signs.
> Charles Sanders Peirce

intersection

The only access to any text, material production in any medium or "that wider universe," is by way of ourselves as readers (Deely xvii). We are the sites for the intersection of everything we perceive. Readers are both the places where readings are produced, and the creators of those readings. I use the word *reading* to describe every and any sort of readerly interaction with any and every sort of text, from the most initial and unconscious (or semi-conscious), to the most intricate, deliberate, and scholarly sort of interaction with a text, or group of texts. Such a wide description of the act of reading is a deliberate strategy. To delimit the description of the act of reading would delimit my ability to describe the process of reading intertextually. Reading intertextually enables readings of signifying sites to be as broad as possible, and/or with readerly editing, to be as limited as any reader desires.

When we encounter texts we supply initial readings, re-adapt our textual worlds, consider how new information is affected by previous information, and construct new readings for those (inter)texts. As writer, reader, and compiler of this text, I have a peculiar relationship to it as an assemblage. I cannot guess exactly how any other reader will interact with this work, or how s/he will inter-relate this work with the wider world of texts with which s/he interacts. During any reading process, textual boundaries are continually blurred and re-asserted. Given that all things might be experienced as signifiers, and endowed with the properties assumed to be art, intertextual readings of the works of Patrick White and Sidney Nolan may include everything in readers' worlds. As I write I am acutely aware that this text is incomplete. I want this text, and all texts, to be assumed always to be incomplete, as being incapable of completion.

Intertextuality is an active process, hence a verbal form of the word is appropriate. Texts can be described as *intertexting* with other texts. Readers *intertext* with a variety of texts during the reading process, and in producing readings, they actively *intertext* those texts. The relationship between texts, intertexts, and readers is always in a state of flux. That flux is dependent upon the innumerable factors that affect material textual and intertextual production, as well as the many ways in which those material texts and intertexts are mediated as they become embodied during acts of reading in readerly spaces.[6] In this thesis, then, I investigate the notion of intertextuality in its broadest forms, and also, I foreground the operation of intertextuality by reading various intersections of the works of Patrick White and Sidney Nolan. I look at various aspects of the intertextual relationships between their works in each of the following categories: intertextuality that exists within each artist's *oeuvre* (intra-*oeuvral* intertextuality); intertextuality that operates specifically between the art of Nolan and the writing of White; and non-White-Nolan intertexts that occur in the art of both men thereby linking their works intertextually – Rimbaud, Shakespeare, the Bible, and both national and international art, myth and history.

I use the works of White and Nolan because they are textual locations that have been particularly contested in Australia in regard to their worth as art, and also in

relation to the ways in which they affect readings of identity in Australian art and culture; and also because the works of both artists resonate with deliberately placed intertextual referents. Both White and Nolan also make productive sites at which to explore both the Australian tradition of venerating the artist as cultural hero, and the tradition in Australian criticism of revolving the discussion of texts primarily around their "authorial" sources, and attempting to attribute meanings to their textual "codings." Simon During writes:

> [the] struggle between the creative writer and the ... critic is commonplace, indeed constitutive, because the writer is dependent on the critics for his or her place in the canon, but the critics anoint writers on their own terms, in discourses that claim mastery over the writing itself. Indeed, critics gain prestige to the extent that they can exceed a writer's own self-interpretation. This is why tensions between critics and writers are structural or constitutive, rather than contingent.(11)

Reading intertextually, however, reader-critics are not necessarily involved in discourses of mastery; both material and readerly textual production are acknowledged as complex processes that cannot be mapped in any exact way. While it may involve texts about authorly production, the process of (inter)textual readerly production need not consider texts about authors' lives (and means of textual production) as intertexts, in order that an intertextual reading be assembled.

This thesis is organised into four sections: *translation rights, disrupting texts, flux*, and *deterritorialisation. Translation rights* explores various intertextual readings of *Riders in the Chariot* and *Voss*, concentrating on the ways in which White's writing intertexts with Nolan's art. These readings explore the ways in which Australia is represented, while departing from readings that are grounded in geographical location and national identity. In this section I also explore *intratextuality*. Each of the remaining sections begins with a different set of meditations upon, and varying descriptions of, the ways in which intertextuality operates. These ideas are then put into practice in order to read the art, fiction and material culture constituted by the works of White and Nolan. By reading intertextually, I explore aspects of their works that have been overlooked, or ignored, when read using other reading strategies. The works of both men have been overly constrained by the practice of Australian cultural critics, in the past, to venerate the works as "great," "truly Australian," and "world

class;" or, conversely, to denigrate Australian works in colonial deference to geographical sites of supposed greater artistic and/or literary worth around the world. The intertextual play that operates across the languages of White and Nolan as they are read intertextually, however, enables readings that are widely divergent, readings that are not always interpretative, readings that constantly fluctuate in their various intensities of intertextual perspective. Throughout this thesis, and particularly in the *conclusions*, I consider the implications of that play, as well as exploring the ways in which intertextual play might be expressed, in various media, as intertextual readings made by this critic. I explore textual medium in order to question how and why we construct what we call texts, and by transgressing the boundaries of textual media (usually used by literary critics), I aim to foreground the fact that what can be expressed by literary criticism has been overly constrained by the medium traditionally assigned to literary critics – words.

Even though I write as a literary critic, I consider both visual and verbal art as translinguistic practices. Art crosses generic boundaries, as well as boundaries of textual media, and all art is culturally mediated. Art is an inherently unstable entity. I propose that anything can be art if the person interacting with that art endows it with the properties assumed by that reader to be "art." I find it a useful strategy to think about White's writing as if it is visual art. His writing often evokes images, inspires feelings, juxtaposes tragedy and comedy, and deals in a currency of social awareness that I find to be concurrent with my understanding of visual art. By resisting the impulse to write always of words as if they are only words, by exploring the translinguistic and trans-textual-media possibilities of reading intertextually (and inter-imagically), I find my analysis of White's text can escape the predictable academic genus of Patrick White criticism.

This study proposes that, with readerly consent, anything can be criticism. All textual boundaries are continually transgressed as intertextuality is allowed to play. I use a number of visual and written metaphors in this study to describe the process of reading intertextually. Metaphoric signifiers enable this text to resonate with possibilities. I assume that textual boundaries, including those of critical language, are

not fences designed to regulate textuality, but are porous, amorphous entities that desire transgression and/or dispersion. Graeme Turner writes that

> [l]iterary training creates a respect for the integrity of the text that motivates resistance to translations of a text from one medium to another ... [In] their dealing with texts, literary critics also develop a preference for the reflective, contemplative and intellectual pleasures over the more passionate, sensual and stimulating ones.(15)

In writing this thesis, I hope that the languages of literary criticism and art commentary might be mutually enhanced, and, at times, transcended altogether; and that the passionate, sensual, and stimulating aspects of the works of White and Nolan might be given as much attention as those facets of their works that invite contemplative and intellectual pleasures.

In exploring the operation of intertextuality, I deploy an eclectic range of methodologies, and a medley of critical devices, in such a way as to allow for the inter-relationships between reader/viewers, works of art in all their forms, intertextualities in their various guises, other discursive practices, artists, descriptions and readings, myths and metaphors, theories and disciplines, and cultural contexts, to be in constant flux. I often approach (inter)textuality from several different perspectives in order to see how (inter)textual relationships vary from context to context. I allow intertextual play between technical terms to operate, rather than trying to isolate the ways in which a certain term is used by one theorist, from the myriad other ways in which that term might work, or play. I believe that the language of criticism must not be expected to obey restrictions with which no other form of language can comply. Criticism that is not always (merely) interpretative has been an aim of this study, criticism that is "political-erotical-mystical," criticism that both works and plays.[7] This study has arrived at many readings and descriptions that invite meditation upon intertextual works (and the process of intertextuality), rather than explications of those works and that process; that speak of the many significances of works (and the process of intertextuality), rather than the signification of works (and intertextuality); readings that are unstable. Intertextuality can be described as a type of material textual production (as in this study); as an aspect of cultural production; as a

variety of readerly experience; and as a reading strategy. In each of these cases it is the potentiality, rather than the actuality, that I explore.

The theory of intertextuality acknowledges that there can be a long and diverse series of readings between contemporary reader/viewers and artistic texts. Neither works of art nor critical texts can exist as discrete units, unless readers attempt to disassociate their readings from selected intertexts. Texts can be considered as (semi)-discrete units, however, if reader/viewers choose wilfully to suspend knowledge of a text's intertexts, whether those intertexts are artistic or otherwise. Such wilful suspension of knowledge can be useful when political (con)texts or critical (con)texts impinge upon art (or upon any other texts) in ways that foreground particular culturally-coded messages in those texts, to the exclusion of all other signifying possibilities. Even though certain artistic intertexts and critical readings of art may be ignored, however, some artistic intertexts and some readings exist so intrinsically as part of the culture that surrounds art-works, as to be difficult to escape. The texts of Australian identity, modernist theory, and critical attempts to define what is meant by the art of White and Nolan, are all texts that I resist in this work. I aim to perform readings that are free from the desire merely to evaluate and categorise; readings that resist closure.

The diverse range of textual territories explored in this thesis is facilitated by the obvious intertextual links between the works of the two men, and also by the fact that the textual/intertextual nets of both White and Nolan are so resonant with possibilities. The degree to which both men explore the play of chance in their texts has affected my writing. Nolan was a great proponent of the idea of random happenings in art. White's writing was perhaps more calculated, but White was certainly aware of the chance occurrences that take place both in life, and in art-production. Intertextuality moves towards unplanned meetings in virtual reading spaces where interim, rather than ultimate, destinations are being sought. My readings of the works explored in this thesis, then, always aim to feed back into the discussion of intertextuality, rather than seeking to arrive at critical destinations via those works. In "Against Interpretation," Susan Sontag creates a binary opposition between an

erotics of art and an interpretation of art, but I prefer to read art intertextually with as many (and varied) intertexts as required/desired during any particular reading event.[8] Sometimes those intertexts might foreground an erotics of art, and/or interpretative reading practices, and/or none of these reading strategies. The intertexts chosen, edited, and/or ignored, depend upon the kind of intertextual readings being made. (Inter)textual possibilities can then resonate and form into inherently unstable intertextual productions inside readerly spaces. Readings can thereby become as diverse and fluctuating with potential (or not) as any reader desires.

I refer to readers as though they are an ideal group, but I have assumed a diversity of human responses during acts of reading. My writing about any particular reader has been restricted to descriptions of my responses to interacting with the works of White and Nolan. Even though I concentrate on aesthetic appreciation of the (inter)texts considered, I do sometimes allow my readings to intertext with other texts (including cultural and political contexts that may affect those readings). I want to make intertextual readings of works, however, that are free from the need to follow a particular political theory consistently. Michael Worton and Judith Still argue that in making intertextual readings,

> [t]he passionate and the power-relations aspects have ... been neutralised by certain theoreticians who present the acts of writing or reading as formal structures, without attending to the love-hate which motivates the transfer of texts ... [although] [r]ecent work has ... returned to the erotic and violent aspects of (the bearers of) intertextual relations.(2)

In this study, however, I approach texts as if they are formal structures that are injected with emotion and politics during individual acts of reading. By constructing my discussion of intertextuality in a "neutral" framework, I am able to concentrate on creating the broadest possible maps of reader/(inter)text relationships. Without this freedom, my discussion might become overwhelmed by the wide variety of political theories that are always potential intertexts with those maps. By foregrounding the "neutrality" of the process of reading intertextually, then, I provide a framework from within which it is

possible for both myself, and other readers, to intertext various political readings during individual acts of reading.

Interacting with the complex texts of White and Nolan allows this thesis to journey into widely varying intertexts. Reading intertextually, texts and intertexts

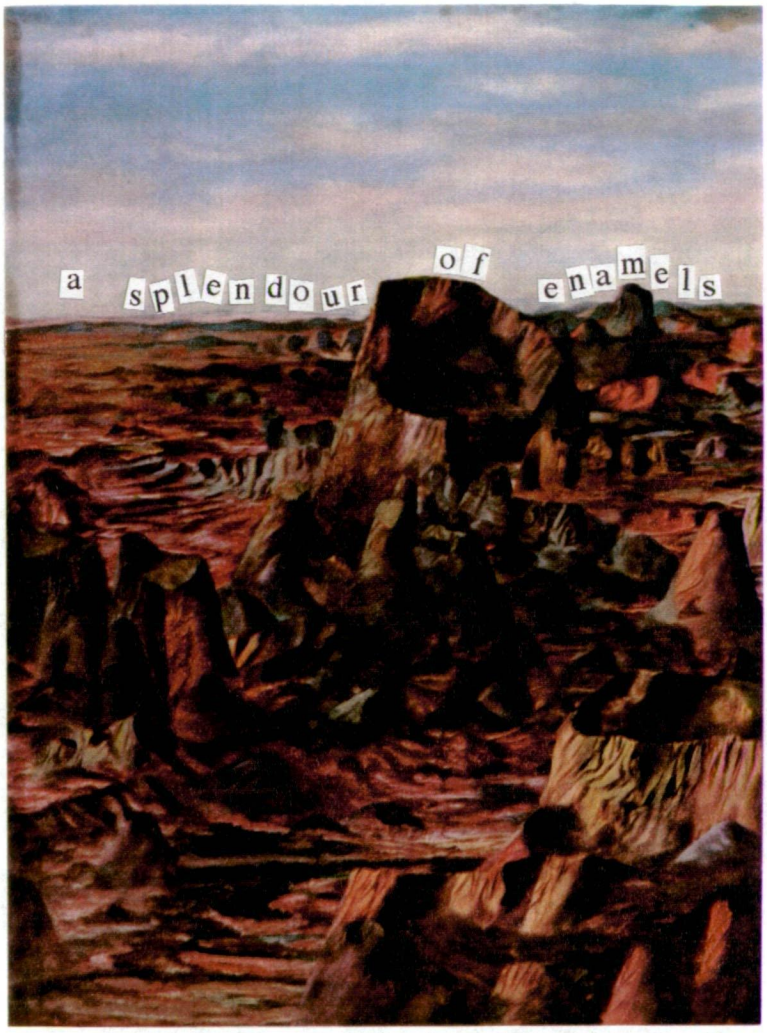


Figure 5 – Diane Caney, *Inter-imagic reading I*, 1996 (fig. 5): an expression of the inter-imagery between "[t]he morning that followed the storm was set in a splendour of enamels" (*Voss* 258) and *Central Australia*, 1950 (fig. 44).

continually collide, disintegrate, and converge into new forms in a reading activity that leads to virtual multi-media-like textual productions and various fluctuations of those productions. These transient new texts emerge as moving intertextual-collages produced by viewers and readers. Understanding the process of reading intertextually can enable readers to become adept at strategising their experience of reading all art intertextually. These dynamic intertextual-collages may exist solely as thoughts, or they may be expressed in various material media as the critical or artistic responses of readers and viewers to interactions with the texts of White and Nolan. *Inter-imagic*

reading I, 1996 (fig. 5) is an example of reading White and Nolan intertextually and expressing that reading as visual/verbal inter-imagic text.[7]

One need not be a Chamber – to be Haunted –
One need not be a House –
The Brain has Corridors – surpassing
Material Place –
Emily Dickinson

... who will provide us with ointment and bandages for our wounds
and remove the foreign ideas the glass beads of fantasy the bent
hairpins of unreason embedded in our minds ...
Janet Frame

virtual intertextuality

These two epigraphs play with the idea that the mind is at once material, and yet it appears not to be. Texts are considered as tangible objects, and also as constructions that move through many different media in the course of their translations from person to person and place to place. I describe text as anything and everything that exists, anywhere. Human readers can detect many of those texts; some texts can be detected by non-human apparatus, documented, and from there they can be read by general readers; some existents will never be read by human beings, but they might be imagined; and some things do not exist outside our imaginations. According to these descriptions of *reading* and *text*, then, we live in a world that is text, in which we are, ourselves, texts; a text need not make sense in order to be described as readable; and the activity of reading is any readerly interaction with a text, or any potential readerly interaction with a text.

Is anything unreadable then? There may well be existents in the universe of all things with which human readers cannot interact, but, according to my description of the terms *text* and *reading*, all existents are texts and therefore have the potential to be read. As yet, however, I have not accounted for the misreading of any text. If anything is apprehended in any way, that thing has been read. Presented with a set of readings from a range of readers in different metabolic and bio-chemical states, it would be very difficult to discern which reading arose from which reader; but a more detailed exploration of the effect of readers' individual physical, emotional, and mental states, and their perceptions of texts, lies outside the boundaries of this study. In whatever way it occurs, however, so-called misreading is an integral part of the reading process. Intertextuality desires misreading, and it is often required in order to explore the process of reading intertextually, even though readerly communities still set (often

unspoken) boundaries within which those misreadings can occur. Even so, the opposite of a misreading, is not an "appropriate" reading. What communities of readers will accept as valid or acceptable readings, why this is so, and exactly how "appropriate" readings differ from misreadings (that are unacceptable to various communities of readers), are all areas that lie outside the chosen parameters of this study.

To map the process of reading intertextually, I must first explore the ways in which texts and intertexts outside our bodies become enmeshed with the texts that we commonly refer to as ourselves; how Emily Dickinson's "Corridors" that surpass "Material Place" are infiltrated by the material (Dickinson 168-69). I do not mean to suggest that texts-that-have-been-read inhabit a space that does not exist in material reality; the exact location of texts-that-have-been-read in any complex network of human brain-mind-body-acculturated-being will always be debated. I do think that there are differences, however, between texts as material objects of production that exist outside any reader's bodily space, texts as cultural objects, texts as they exist within various communities of readers, and texts as they are understood or read by individual readers. I also believe that the differences between those textual constructions are manufactured in a way that makes them porous, shifting, and often illogical. Each way of describing *text* will always intertext with other ways of describing *text*. There is an inherent paradox in any attempt to categorise any word. I have begun with the broadest possible description of *text*, then, but because my exploration of intertextuality is situated within the parameters of literary and art theory, I will need to intertext a broad philosophical description of text with a more delimited understanding of texts as books, paintings, drawings, or photographs. I also intertext all those terms with the wider sense of texts as works of art. Intertextual readings of texts are situated within cultural contexts, and will also intertext, therefore, with various theories under the heading "cultural studies."

It can be argued that reading texts means making them part of our mind-body-acculturated-being, but the reading process is not usually thought of as involving corporeal enmeshment of every aspect of the text that exists outside our bodies. By

regarding texts a reader draws information into readerly space, but material texts usually stay intact physically after readers interact with their substance. Texts such as food are meant to become part of our bodies, but the action of eating is not often described as being an act of reading. Material art, such as paintings and books of poetry, is not generally physically damaged by human encounter, and unless they are deliberately vandalised, material texts can usually be restored if routine interactions with art-viewers or readers cause any slight damage. Even though we rarely eat our art, some art-texts, such as food-sculptures and sacraments of communion, are designed to be integrated physically within human bodies. Advertising, propaganda, political lobbying, artistic practice, arts bureaucracies, and the texts of literary and artistic criticism, however, all attest to the fact that people can be affected by reading material texts. People can be provoked to buy, to change, to act, to write, to create art, and to be otherwise unsettled in all sorts of ways, by interacting with material texts. The texts outside our bodies are not usually affected by readers then, but readers can be affected by material texts. How then do material texts effect these changes in readers' beings? And how does the material text differ from the (inter)text drawn into readerly space? This thesis document is commonly thought of as a stable "material" entity. Every person who encounters its substance, however, will experience a different text.

In order to explore how a text can become so disparate at the very point at which it is either read or heard, I find it useful to distinguish between the material text in its physical exteriority to the human body, and the text that is created by "that faculty of the mind by which are formed images or concepts of external objects [either present or] not present to the senses ... sometimes called the 'reproductive imagination'" (*OED*).[10] Because the word imagination is overly laden with theoretical implications, however, I have named the operation of this type of readerly re-creation of either an absent or a present material text, a *virtual text*, rather than an imaginative text. And because calling the space in which a virtual text exists "mind space" introduces the circular mind-body argument, I have called the space, *virtual space*. The word "virtual," as associated with computers, is described as "[n]ot physically existing as

such but made by software to appear to do so from the point of view of ... the user" (*OED*). Charles Peirce defines "virtual" as: "[a] virtual *X* (where *X* is a common noun) is something, not an *X*, which has the efficiency (*virtus*) of an *X*" (763). That is, when I interact with a virtual text, I might as well have the actual text in front of me, but I do not.[11]

The virtual text, according to Peirce, would have the efficiency of the actual or material text. The degree of efficiency depends on readerly ability to recall what was present as material text. This is not a matter of simple translation from virtual text back to remembrance of material text, however, because I argue that material texts are corrupted at the point at which they are converted into virtuality. A reader may intertext the material text being read with any of myriad virtual (inter)texts stored in his/her readerly virtual space. A material text, then, moves through an intertextuality with a reader's virtual text-world, as it is read. There are no mirror-images when readers read intertextually. Even if I try to convert a material text into virtual text without intertexting that text with any intertext, the material text intertexts with me, and therefore becomes an intertextuality even as it is read.

My description of virtuality, then, involves an intertextuality of virtuality as the *OED* describes it, Peirce's description of virtual, the ever-expanding cultural understanding of computer-generated virtual reality, and the ways in which computer software can digitally re-work images and texts as commanded by the software user. I don't intend computer-generated virtual reality to be a direct analogy for reading intertextually. Computer-generated virtual reality, however, provides a suggestive and useful metaphor for the space created and experienced during every variety of readerly interaction with every variety of text. A text that has its efficiency outside a reader's existence, then, is reproduced, edited and/or embellished inside a reader's internal space. Inside that reader's space a material text has the efficiency of the text that exists outside the reader's space, but the material text has not literally been physically deconstructed, and physically reconstructed, inside that readerly space. Obviously, we do not have text-books wedged into our grey-matter (fig. 6). We creatively deconstruct texts in virtual spaces, and reconstruct them there (intertextually), in order to arrive at

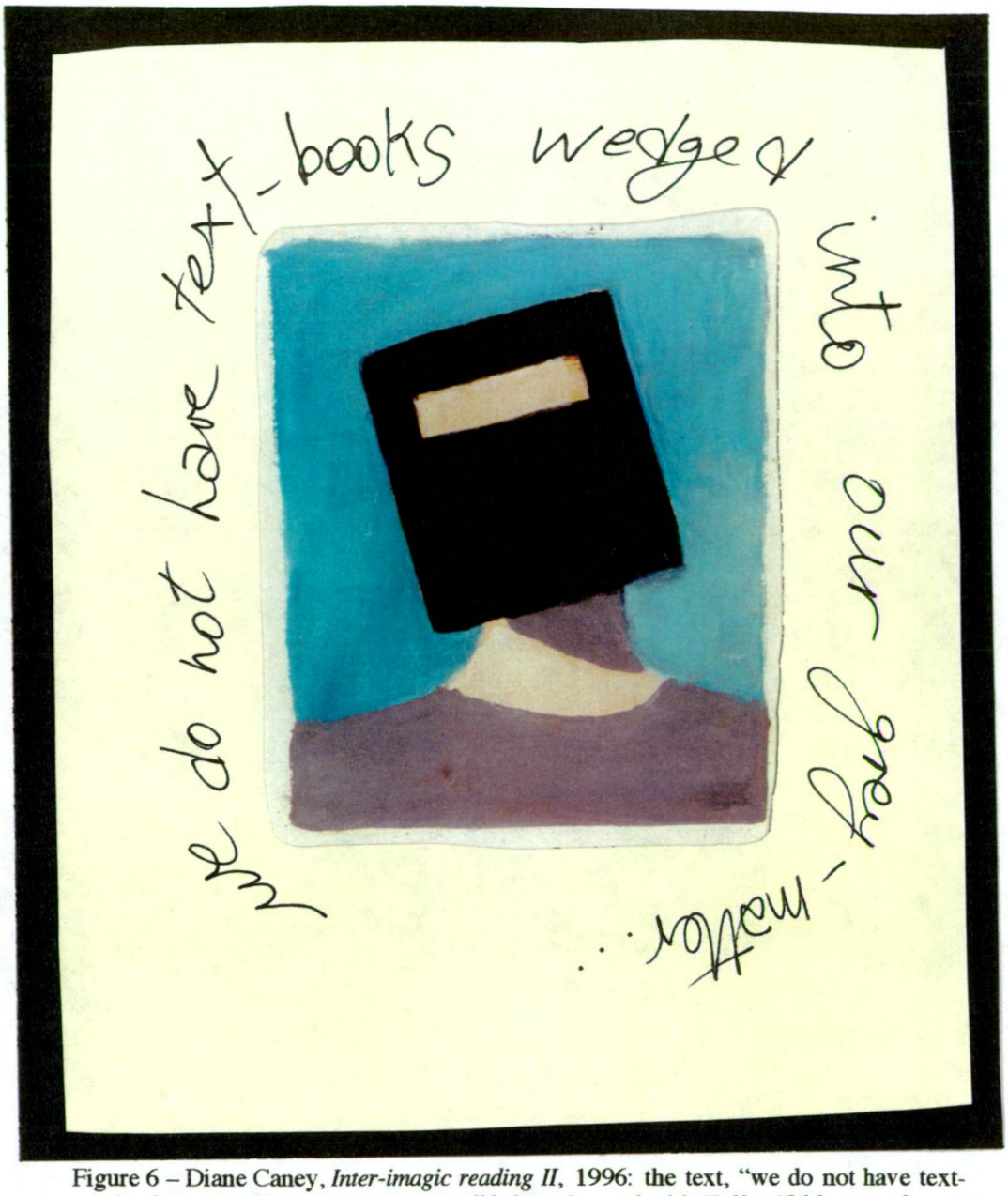


Figure 6 – Diane Caney, *Inter-imagic reading II*, 1996: the text, "we do not have text-books wedged into our grey-matter," is inter-imaged with *Kelly*, 1946, enamel over monotype on paper, 31.6 x 25.4 cm, ANG, page 34 of *SND*.

temporary readings of those texts. The status of those readings is always temporary because we may, at any time, re-edit any virtual text as we respond to a new material text, or as we meditate upon virtual intertextual readings.

The terms "material text" and "virtual text," then, serve to distinguish between texts that exist as objects of production, and/or objects of reality, in a space external to the beings of readers or viewers; and texts that exist inside any reader's capacity to: remember and forget, interpret and/or ignore, read and embellish, intertext with other texts, and construct texts (either absent or materially present texts) into virtual intertextual readings.[11] The word *material* is problematic because it implies that texts

as they exist (or as they are assumed to exist) outside human bodies, have a certain sort of fixed corporeality. By the term "material text," however, I am merely implying that there is a realm outside human bodies, and outside human perceptions, that differs from that realm as it is experienced by readers. I do not mean to infer that this distinction is any more real than any of the other myths with which we live and read. For the purposes of discussing the various ways in which intertextuality and textuality are apprehended by readers, however, I need a term to create a difference between the two "types" of texts. I acknowledge that this description of the reading process is flawed, and transitory, as are, and as will be, all attempts to describe what it is that we do when we interact with texts.

At the moment of reading a material text, that text becomes both materially present and virtually present to the reader. At some time after a reader has finished scanning a material text, that text becomes materially absent and the virtual text is then relied upon by the reader in order to participate in the act of reading intertextually.[13] There is a blurring of boundaries between material texts and virtual texts. When a material text is being read, it is both physically present, and virtually present in readerly perception. That text is then in a state of metamorphosis from being material and unread (and virtually non-existent, or virtually preformed if a reader has information or preconceived ideas about that text); to being in the actual process of transference from page to readerly space where it is virtually reconfigured (material-virtual-text); and finally, being materially absent, and virtually present as reading. Virtual space provides a medium in which texts can be creatively reworked and merged together in ways that are often impossible outside virtual readerly spaces. One of the virtual texts involved in the process of creative intertextual reworkings of texts is a reader's subjectivity, that reader's notion of identity. (Texts about the theory of subjectivity could intertext with this entire study and radically alter its outcome.)[14]

Diagram 1 is one way of mapping material textuality and virtual intertextuality. The patterned circles on the left-hand side of the main (inter)text being read (the central circle marked "text"), represent the material (inter)textuality being read. The patterned circles on the right-hand side of the diagram (including the "actual point of reading,"

and the "reading") represent the virtual intertextual realm of the reading process, which is the composite entity of the reader involved in the process reading intertextually. In this diagram, the "reader" includes the circle involved in the enmeshment with the primary material text, "the actual point of reading," and the reader is also the many other virtual (inter)text-circles. The fragmented boundaries of both the material and the

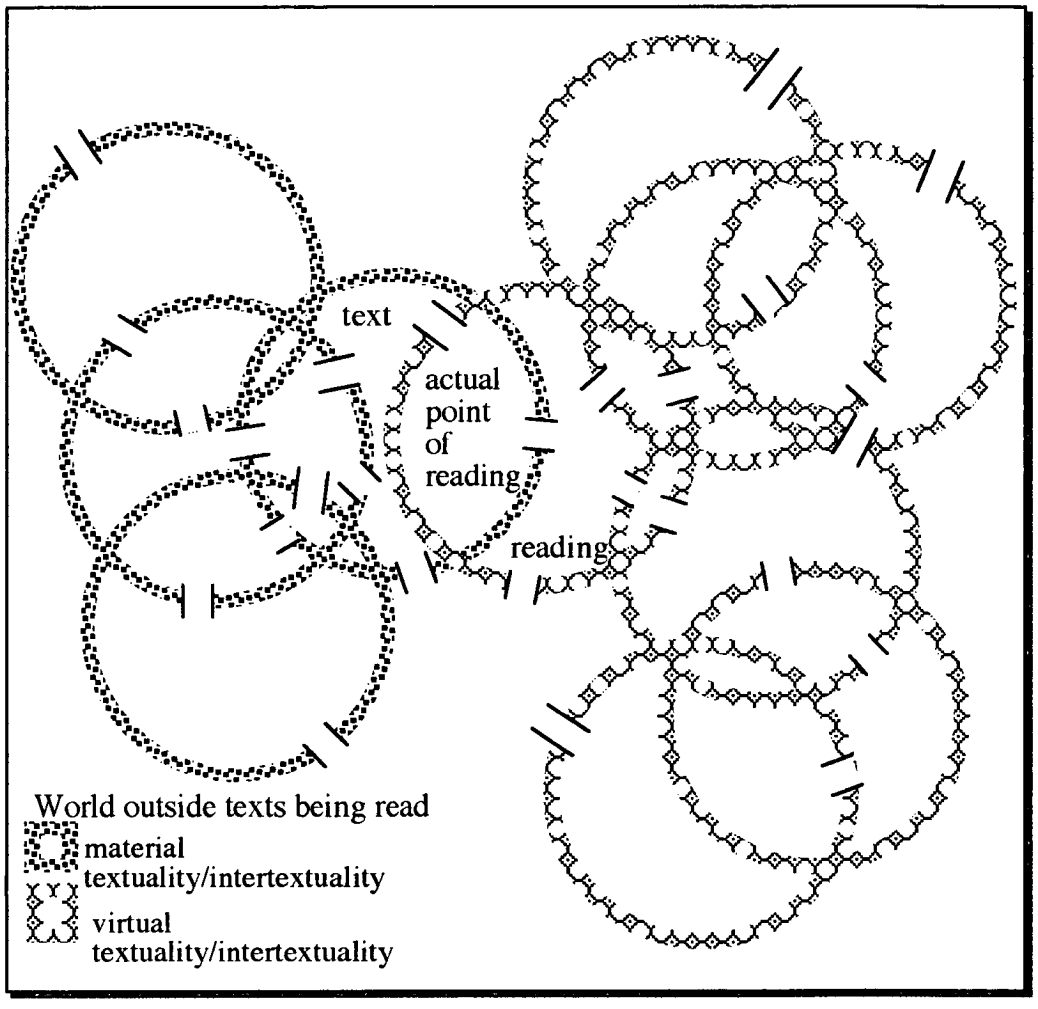


diagram 1

virtual texts indicate the ways in which textuality can flow from text to text unimpeded, almost as if by osmosis. The wider breaks (pathways) through these boundaries, represent the ways in which textuality can be deliberately moved by artists and authors (in the material realm), and by readerly volition (in the virtual realm). Cultural forces (which include critical writings, media representation, and other forms of textual review) also intertext with material texts, potentially altering the ways in which they will be read. Virtual intertextual readings are constructed by a process of readerly editing, enmeshing, and the traversing of various texts and intertexts with other virtual

intertextual readings.

Diagram 1 indicates that material texts are the results of myriad other textual transactions, and are always potentially influenced by other (inter)texts. Any reading is usually drawn through one text (a novel), or one set of texts (such as an exhibition of paintings), which becomes the primary focus for any particular reading. There is a sense, however, in which there is always the potential to reach back into a text (or out from a text), to a text's intertextual contexts. The process of reading intertextually always involves one or more *virtual intertextual readings*, then, rather than one or more *texts*, or one or more *intertexts*. To attempt to write as if there were no textual boundaries would be problematic, but it is only the myths of reading theory that allow us to speak of texts and intertexts as if they were discrete textual entities. While these myths facilitate the discussion of (inter)texts, they can only ever be myths of reading theory.

Intertexting the writing of White with the visual art of Nolan requires a space in which the boundaries understood as separating visual and verbal texts can dissolve. In Jim Sharman's television documentary *The Burning Piano: a portrait of Patrick White*, text and scenes from *Voss* intertext with Nolan's painting *The Galaxy*, 1957-58 (fig. 7). Sharman has actors read text from *Voss* using *The Galaxy* as a backdrop (figs. 8 & 9). This intertextuality is artistically successful, but in order to be read as intertextual text involving the works of White and Nolan, an active intertextual readerly space is required because Nolan's painting is not declared to be a work by Nolan within the boundaries of the filmic scenes. Nolan originally called *The Galaxy* (a painting that White owned for a time), *Soldiers shelled while bathing*, when it was first exhibited in 1958 (*SNLL* 135). He was visited by Patrick White later that year who said it looked more "'[like a celestial chain-gang knee-deep in the] Milky Way' than the inside of an atom: a macrocosm – rather than a microcosm – of the human universe. They changed its title to *The Galaxy*" (Clark, *SNLL* 124; *Letters* n. 258).[15] The painting might have remained part of Nolan's *Gallipoli* sequence, a series that relies heavily on the history of Australians in Turkey during the first World War, if it had not been for the change to the painting's title. The work still refers to the *Gallipoli* series, but it also

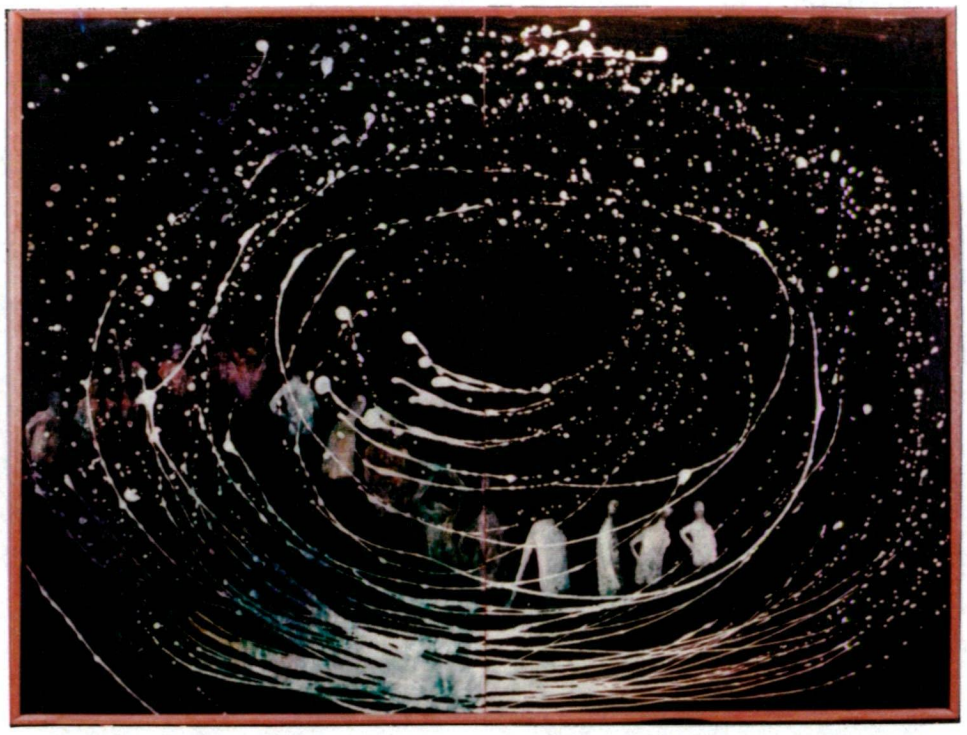


Figure 7 – *The Galaxy*, 1957-58, polyvinyl acetate on two canvases mounted on hardboard, 193 x 256 cm, AGNSW, gift of Patrick White 1974 (reproduced with their kind permission).

Figure 8 – Judy Davis as Laura Trevelyan, with *The Galaxy*, 1957-58. Video still from Jim Sharman, *The Burning Piano*, television documentary, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1993 (broadcast: 3.3.1993).

refers to war in general, to the so-called human condition and to earth's place within the universe. The work operates as an analogy for the ways in which wars can forever alter human consciousness, and, with the advent of the nuclear bomb, the ways in which weapons can mutate the very fabric of the universe in which we live. Reading the work without any understanding of the work's context, using only the title *The Galaxy* as a guide, the fact that the work is referring to war at all might be missed.

Sharman capitalises on all these attributes in *The Burning Piano* when he uses the painting as a backdrop to symbolise the desert across which Laura Trevelyan and Voss speak about humanity, hatred, and their feelings for one another (figs. 8 & 9). When the painting is read intertextually, it can communicate the fact that (for White) the metaphysical relationship between Voss and Laura was based on that of White and Manoly Lascaris in the second World War, the possibility that two people can communicate telepathically across vast distances, the fact that human beings are capable of perceiving the heavens, and also that great suffering is the lot of humankind. White's statement that the German explorer, Voss, was partly based on the megalomaniac Hitler, might also be drawn into the reading because of the war connection, even though Nolan had been depicting a different twentieth-century war (*FG* 104). Images of Laura (played by Judy Davis [fig. 8]) and Voss (played by Geoffrey Rush [fig. 9]) in Sharman's documentary, are merged cinematically with the painting to convey the fact that the universe depicted is both inner and outer. The fact that White's opinions influenced Nolan's decision to change the title of the painting, and even the fact that White owned the painting for a time, also influence the work's ability to be as connected with his writing in Sharman's documentary. Within virtual readerly spaces, then, intertextual collages can be produced that defy the constraints of any textual medium that exists outside readerly beings, even material texts that are multi-media productions.

When a material text has been constructed chronologically after its intertexts, its author is able to make references to those intertexts within the physical textual body of that "new" text. I use the terms new text and/or primary text to describe any text being considered as the focus for an intertextual exploration. The category of new text

Figure 9 – Geoffrey Rush as Johann Ulrich Voss, with *The Galaxy*, 1957-58 Video still from Jim Sharman, *The Burning Piano*, television documentary, Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Commission, 1993, (broadcast: 3.3.1993).

Figure 10 – Walter De Maria, *Lightning Field,* 1971-77, earth sculpture, 1 mile x 1 kilometre, DIA Art Foundation, plate 251 of *Shock*.

is always arbitrary and shifting, however, depending upon which text (or set of texts) is chosen as the focus for any reading. Because chronology of production is inconsequential to readers, an "older" text can feasibly be discussed as the focus for intertexts that chronologically post-date the older text's production. For example, Sharman's 1993 documentary produces invigorating readings of White's pre-1993 writing, when technically, on a chronological time-scale, such intertextuality could not have been initiated by White. Sharman's productions of passages from White's work are never examples of simple reverse-ekphrasis, however, but are intertextual readings of his works that can affect our re-readings of White's writing.

Raymond Blanco portrays an aboriginal reader of White's books throughout *The Burning Piano*. Blanco's aboriginality particularly intertexts with Alf Dubbo, an aboriginal artist and reader of Australian society in White's novel, *Riders in the Chariot*. This intertextuality is promoted by the fact that Blanco also plays the parts of both Himmelfarb and Dubbo during the scenes from *Riders in the Chariot* in *The Burning Piano*.[16] The intertextuality in *The Burning Piano* is obviously intended by Sharman, but readers need not be affected by either time/space relationships that affect material (inter)texts, or by authorly intention, when they make intertextual readings. There is a sense in which any reading may involve intertextuality with any or every text we have ever read, on both an unconscious and/or semi-conscious level; but there is also the potential for active and semi-active readerly involvement in every intertextual reading process, with readers free both to edit, embellish, omit and/or include whichever intertexts they choose.

There is a great degree of freedom in the process of reading intertextually, then, but if those readings are to be based upon material texts and intertexts, and not solely on readerly interpretations of those texts, close readings need to be made of virtual imagic texts for visual alignment, and/or virtual written texts for verbal alignment, with the material texts from which they were drawn. For example, my virtual reading of *The Eye of the Storm* includes references to Odilon Redon's etchings. I read the novel as inviting me to intertext Redon's works with the novel (200). If I were to check my virtual reading of *The Eye of the Storm* with the book,

however, and discover that Elizabeth actually looks at etchings by William Blake, there would be a very different intertextuality at work in my virtual space; one that I had imagined, rather than readerly re-workings of (inter)texts that I had actually seen in White's novel. Such a reading is valid. Deliberate or mistaken misreadings of intertextual referents, intertextuality that is read into a work by a reader without there having been overt invitation placed within material texts, and readings based entirely upon intertexts that have evolved from readerly creative imaginations (and that have no existence outside those virtual spaces), can all be described as valid intertextual readings of material (inter)texts. All acts of reading, writing, and other forms of textual production, however, take place within communities of readers, writers and other text-producers, just as all texts exist within those communities.[17] If intertextual (mis)readings are to become part of debates within communities of scholarly readers, then, readers need to develop strategies by which to argue for the existence of intertextuality that is not closely associated with the actual signifiers of material texts. Otherwise, revising Humpty Dumpty's statement to Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, I might say, "When I read a text, it means just what I choose it to mean;" or "When I see a text, I see just what I choose to see" (274).[18]

Barbara Johnson speaks of misreading as being integral to the notion of intertextuality (116). Certainly intertextuality involves disruptions of meaning that can be read as misreadings, and intertextuality often actively invites misreading (as with Max Ernst's collages). Even though misprision need not necessarily form the basis of every sort of intertextual reading, however, intertextual readings and other varieties of intertextual textual production, are always constrained by the abilities of readerly, writerly and artistic communities to intertext. Both reading and misreading involve the same activity – interaction with texts. Misreading may mean that what a reader remembers of a text is very definitely *not* what was seen when reading a material text, but there might be numerous other reasons for that misprision, including engagement in the strategy of active readerly misreading.[19]

In discussing textuality and intertextuality within the discipline of "literary theory," Barbara Johnson points to an important feature of intertextuality:

> [c]ontemporary discussions of intertextuality can be distinguished from "source" studies in that the latter speak in terms of a transfer of property ("borrowing") while the former tend to speak in terms of misreading or infiltration, that is, of violations of property ..."[I]ntertextuality" designates the multitude of ways a text has of not being self-contained, of being traversed by otherness.(116)

Following my argument so far, Johnson's argument can be read as pointing to the fact that every material text will be traversed by the "otherness" of the reader's virtual space, which is full of virtual intertextual readings. But some texts are materially constructed so that they are more deliberately inviting of intertextual readings of specific intertexts, and it is obviously valid critical practice to distinguish between discussions that foreground source studies and those that investigate (inter)textual transgressions.

To move back from this fundamental reading of Johnson's argument, then, to read her words in the context of literary theoretical discussion of "literary" text, the distinction between source studies and intertextual studies is necessary, because source studies assume texts to be more separate entities than do various theories of intertextuality. In the case of White's fictions, it is particularly important to clarify, following Johnson, what is meant by intertextuality as opposed to the searches of critics for literary or artistic sources, influences and symbols. Such searches have usually been founded on the desire to discover the author's intention in having referred to other texts, or to uncover hidden meanings that have been set in place by the author. White was plagued by people wanting to know what his fiction meant, and to which texts he was referring in his works. Readers and critics were intent upon finding the sources of his works, as if truth would accompany such revelations. Intertextuality, however, is not about searching for the truth behind any text, the real or authorially-intended reference.

In reply to a set of queries by Manfred Mackenzie, who was involved in such a pursuit, White wrote:

> I think you are playing a dangerous game – fascinating to the player no doubt – in all this symbol-chasing. Most of the time it leads up the wrong tree ... I am sorry not to be able to confess to most of the influences you suggest. I may have arrived at certain conclusions <u>via other writers</u> who had read those you mention.

> Otherwise I suppose symbols can pop out of the collective subconscious.(*Letters* 216-17)

Despite White's caution here, there cannot really be a "wrong tree" when making intertextual readings of texts (especially when the intertexts detected in a material text have existence outside our persons). Intertextuality allows for a freedom of textual interplay to occur, and whether or not White intended that play to take place, ceases to matter. If Mackenzie can demonstrate that intertextuality is at work within White's novel, it is. Misreadings or misperceptions of texts are judged by a community of readers. If readings or perceptions enter readerly communities they may be debated, but to refute readings utterly, as invalid, denies the fact that individual readers are able to interact with a world that can be read as a vast intertextuality, to draw as much of that intertextuality into their readings as they choose; or conversely that some readers are only able to read texts as they do, either because of the cultural intertexts with which they always read (whether consciously or unconsciously), or because of the ways in which they have been taught to read.

The novel *Voss* is the source for the translation of some scenes from White's novel into cinematic form for Jim Sharman's documentary *The Burning Piano,* but these translations can also be discussed in terms of intertextuality, ekphrasis, or an intertextuality of all these ideas. Each of these terms foreground different ideas about the ways in which texts intersect, and textual boundaries are blurred. Source studies tend to privilege investigation of the choices made by text-producers to place other "textual property" within their own works, the implications of those inclusions, revisions and/or omissions. Source studies might also investigate the degrees to which readers may or may not be aware of a work's sources, and may include discussions as to why readers' perceptions of those sources change.

Studies in intertextuality place the emphasis on the textual transference involved at the material site of production (how the invitation to read certain intertexts is placed within a text); as well as investigating readerly interaction with, virtual construction of, and comprehension of, those texts and their intertexts; and also how the culture within which texts are situated affects their intertextual production (both

material and readerly). Intertextuality investigates the ways in which readers creatively merge many works; a process that resembles digitally re-working computer images by using software especially designed for that purpose. Intertextuality allows the process of textual and intertextual enmeshments, disentanglements, and erasures, to be ongoing.

Ekphrasis is the study of direct translation from one medium into another, traditionally from words to images, and as such it will necessarily overlap with almost any intertextual discussion about the intertextuality of material texts that operates across varying textual media. Virtual texts exist in textual media that is not only different from every form of material text, but is also different for every reader. No one knows exactly where and how texts are located inside readerly spaces, but it is generally thought that those complex enmeshments of body, being and text are different for every reader. Variations on ekphrasis are involved in every act of reading, then, as text outside any reader is translated into a virtual readerly space (and medium).

Intertexting the notions of source studies, intertextuality and ekphrasis enables readings that reverberate with many different (inter)textual resonances and emphases, readings that are liberated from the constraints dictated by attempting to remain within one reading strategy. While this study concentrates on theories of intertextuality, the activity of reading intertextually allows for intertextuality with many other (inter)texts.

Joan Letcher, *Untitled*, 1993 (fig. 159, repeated).

intertexting descriptions of intertextuality

There are various descriptions of intertextuality within theoretical texts, and various ways of describing the words used to make those descriptions. Intertexting all those descriptions enables creative intertextual readings of intertextuality to emerge and mutate. Julia Kristeva coined the term *intertextuality* in her essays, "The Bounded Text" and "Word, dialogue, and novel," both of which were first published in 1969 (Roudiez 3-4). In his glossary of terms, Léon Roudiez comments of the term *intertextuality*,

> [t]he concept ... has been generally misunderstood. It has nothing to do with matters of influence by one writer upon another, or with the sources of a literary work ... It is defined in [Kristeva's] *La Révolution du langage poétique* [1974] as the transposition of one or more *systems* of signs into another ... "Any signifying practice is a field (in the sense of space traversed by lines of force) in which various signifying systems undergo such a transposition." (15)

This description of intertextuality intertexts with Walter De Maria's *Lighting Field*, 1971-77 (fig. 10) which acts as one way of picturing the spatial language used by

many theorists to describe textuality and intertextuality.[20] The lightning poles are an imposition on the textual landscape, but they also act as conductors allowing always for the intertextuality of unexpected lightning with the work of art, enabling the field to become a space literally "traversed by lines of force."

Many literary theorists have written about intertextuality since Kristeva, and there are various theories of intertextuality with which this study intertexts. Worton and Still write,

> "[i]ntertextuality" – it should come as no surprise – is a promiscuous inter-discipline, or even a trans-discipline, certainly a transvestite discipline in that it constantly borrows its trappings now from psychoanalysis, now from political philosophy, now from economics and so on.(Worton & Still viii).

Given that the word *discipline* is usually read to imply a form of study that involves traditions, methods and boundaries, I would prefer to consider the operation of intertextuality as a way of describing what happens during the process of making texts, including the widest possible varieties of textual intersections, intersections that "'operate through and across language' — language in its broadest form" (Kristeva 36). I see intertextuality as involving both material and readerly productions in which texts inter-relate and transmute.

In order to describe intertextuality, Barbara Johnson refers to "infiltration" and "violations of property," and suggests that "'[i]ntertextuality' designates the multitude of ways a text has of ... being traversed by otherness" (116). One dictionary describes "traverse" as

> [t]o run across or through; [t]o run (something) through with a weapon, to pierce, stab ... to penetrate ... [t]o cross (a thing) with a line ... or anything that intersects ... [t]o be crossed with lines ... to pass or journey across, over, or through; to pass through (a region) from side to side, or from end to end; also to pass through (a solid body), as rays of light etc ... [t]o go to and fro over or along; to cross and recross.(*OED*).

Intertexting this dictionary description of "traverse," with other words Johnson uses to describe intertextuality, invites readings of texts and intertexts that include many metaphors. Words and phrases like "infiltration," "violations of property," and "traversed by otherness" in Johnson, and "stab," "pierce," and "journey" in the dictionary description, invite readings of the intertextuality of texts as bodies of land

that have been purchased, or invaded during acts of war; animal or human bodies that have been penetrated and/or injured; and/or land or living bodies that are being crossed over and over, perhaps even illegally. There are transgressions and allusions to violence, which bring with them connotations of illegality and/or war. Is intertextuality a process whereby a text is repeatedly invaded by an alien text, damaged, broken, violated? Must intertexts be thought of as *alien*? Must intertexts cause violent disruptions to other texts? And, if so, how do these interpretations allow for the similarities often inherent in texts that intertext, and also for harmonious intermingling? Must there be a binary opposition between violence and harmony? Is either metaphor appropriate?

There is an "otherness" to intertexts when texts that exist outside the boundaries of one text, are drawn inside the boundaries of a new material text. There is also an otherness to an intertext that is drawn into a new text by a reader, without there having been overt reference to that intertext in a new text. The notion of "other," however, need not necessarily progress beyond the description of the differences of the material sources of the (inter)texts. There are disruptions when any text is traversed by another (an "other") text, but to think of that disruption as necessarily violent, or even as potentially violent, assumes that texts are ordinarily stable and whole, and that after acts of intertextual reading those texts are somehow plundered, vandalised, or transgressed. I see texts, however, as unstable conglomerates of various textual media that invite disruption, that thrive on disruption, that cannot survive without disruption. Readings are transient moments when a variety of intertexts aggregate and sit as an unstable entity until something happens to end that particular momentary gathering. I denote these transient moments by bracketing the description of a reading with the Trademark symbol (™transient reading moment™) after the style of Eco's use of semiotic graphics.[21] These transient moments are arrived at, as interim conclusions, in an environment in which there can only ever be interim conclusions.

Any ™intertextual reading™ or ™inter-imagic reading™ is not only being affected by the traversing of one text or image by "otherness," but also by the convergence of similarities that are capable of knitting together both texts, where all

texts are unstable entities, not inherently fixed objects that are usually impervious to infiltration by other texts. The intertextuality that plays between *A Fringe of Leaves* and Sidney Nolan's *Eliza Fraser* series allows for specific intertextual or inter-imagic resonances because signifiers were deliberately placed in the novel by Patrick White, and because the cultural productions of both works of art are such that readers can readily see play at work. Even so, such play is still reliant on readerly creativity in constructing virtual intertextual readings. When specific intertextual resonances occur because signifiers have been deliberately placed in *A Fringe of Leaves* by White, or because the cultural productions of both the works of White and Nolan are such that reader/viewers can readily see inter-imaging or intertextuality with the historico-myth of Eliza Fraser, any ™intertextual reading™ or ™inter-imagic reading™ involves the becoming-Nolan-image of White text, and the becoming-White-text of Nolan image, and the becoming-historico-myth of both these intertexts.[22] Each of these sets of works is being traversed by readings of their similitude as much as their otherness.

Continuing to intertext the description of "traverse" with other words Johnson uses to describe intertextuality, suggests a metaphorics of mathematics and geometry as lines cross and re-cross. But are these lines the straight lines of linear thinking, and some mathematics? Or are they the lines of music, or drawing, or the flight paths of bees? The lines might be straight, curved, haphazard, and sometimes they may even double back before resuming their courses to some "other" side. They might be "bent hairpin" lines of "unreason," or they might be the lines of fractals which have a pattern of regularity even in their apparent chaos (Frame, *Faces* 9). Does Johnson's model of a new text being traversed by an intertext suggest a small party of foreign words or images travelling across a new text leaving behind readily identifiable tracks, rather like the tracks of animals, people, or cars in the desert sand, perhaps? Because the dictionary description speaks in terms of lines passing "through" whatever it is that is being traversed, does this infer that an intertext leaves a new text, after having crossed it? Could the operation of intertextuality be likened to the insect-like heads of the two time styluses (of Murray Kirkland's *Two Pages*, 1996 [an artist's book installation]) which scribble on metallic ochre plaster dust on two metre-square plaster pages? In

this reading, Kirkland's pages become metaphors for texts being read, and the scribbling styluses are various intertexts involved in the activity of traversing those texts. This activity can only take place in a dynamic readerly environment.

Some intertexts, however, seem to inhabit new texts. Like the styluses they are permanently and perpetually *en route* to "other" sides. Is there a sense that texts may be haunted by intertexts, that all texts are haunted by the presence of other texts, by both the otherness and the similitude of those other texts? The word *haunted* carries connotations of phantoms, bodiless substances where once there was materiality. Virtual texts are like phantoms. The translation from material texts into virtual texts can be likened to the translation of solid matter into gas, or liquid. My argument leads me to believe that all texts are phantoms, even when they appear in the guise of tangible objects that sit on library shelves. Our cultural understanding of matter (in Australia) leads us to accept the myth that external reality is substantially different to readerly perceptions of reality. Neither current scientific thought, however, nor philosophical theories support this myth. The texts I am labelling as material might be equally as insubstantial as those being considered as virtual. Are the texts and intertexts that exist outside our bodies significantly different from the virtual texts and intertexts we construct during acts of reading, or might material texts just as well be holographs?

If this text were to be read aloud, we might all hear the same text being read, but where is that same text? If this text is translated into sound-waves, that sound only "lasts" for a matter of moments, before its vibration has left the arena from which it can affect us. And the text my readers have in the virtual spaces they inhabit, is not the same as any other version of this text. We all assume the paper on which this text is printed to be material and fixed, but the space occupied by these words and images outside any of our bodies is unreachable to any of us, except via the mediation of our own body-mind-acculturated-beings. And usually that mediation involves us intertexting the virtual texts of ourselves with this text at the moment it is read. I would argue, then, that the word *perfuse* ("to cover or suffuse ... to diffuse through or over") might either replace or accompany *traverse* in Johnson's description of intertextuality (*OED*). I would also suggest that the entity with which a text is traversed and/or

perfused, as intertextuality takes place, is not only "otherness," but also "similitude." Revising Barbara Johnson's description of intertextuality (page 29 of this thesis), then: intertextuality might designate the multitude of ways a text has of not being self-contained, of being traversed and/or perfused with readings of both the otherness and the similitude of other texts.

As well as both the physical and the metaphysical nature of texts being questioned today, the notions of ownership and authorship of texts are also being broken down. With the increase of cinematic texts, which credit many people as responsible for their construction, with the increasing use of the world-wide web, and with reproduction, de-contextualisation, and visual enmeshment of texts and images becoming so much easier via the use of modern technology and the mass media, ownership and authorship are terms that require urgent revision.[23] The changes in textual boundaries, and the inherent changes in textual understanding, that will occur over the next few decades will be exciting and destabilising intertextual revolutions. As we wait for these changes to permeate our world, however, we still live with the myth that both material and virtual texts are discrete, or at least (semi)-discrete units, with partly definable boundaries. In the case of textual ownership and copyright laws, textual boundaries become legal barriers involving politics and economics, as well as textual theory. Without the notion of property ownership of texts, and copyright, however, would there be such a thing as intertextuality at all? Would not all texts simply mingle without boundaries being able to be trespassed?

As it is, formal academic guidelines are set up in order to prevent wantonly intertextual essays being written, essays that might disobey copyright laws and/or the rules against plagiarism, essays that might "violate" another's "property" (Johnson 116). The recent case of Helen Demidenko-Darville in Australia has demonstrated that we still adhere to the notion that textual ownership is important. At the time of another Australian literary hoax, the Ern Malley affair, it would have been considered ludicrous to have accused James McAuley and Harold Stewart of plagiarism, rather than Max Harris of indecency. When they were first made, however, Max Ernst's collages were labelled as acts of plagiarism (Spies 24-25). Such accusations were of

great concern to Ernst. The accusations against Darville have also been accompanied by all the trappings of a court-case. While it is possible to read her case as "writerly malpractice," however, it is also possible to read her book, *The Hand That Signed the Paper*, as a text that is deliberately pushing the boundaries that we insist must accompany textual production and dissemination in this society. Whether it is considered as good, bad or mediocre textual production, Darville's book is a site of intertextuality that undoubtedly questions text as property, and our insistence on venerating the author as primary site of textual production in Australia.

Barbara Johnson suggests that,

> the very notion of a self-contained literary "property" is shown to be an illusion. When [a text] is read in its dynamic intertextuality ... [it] becomes differently energized, traversed by forces and desires that are invisible or unreadable to those who see it as an independent, homogenous message unit, a totalizable collection of signifieds. (Johnson 116-17).

Are texts traversed by "forces" and "desires," then, that are *only* readable by those who see them as interdependent hybrid messages, as textual nets with spaces for intersection with other texts? Are the workings of intertextuality restricted to active readerly intervention? Or is the process of intertextual assimilation of material and virtual text-worlds a complex process, the workings of which are not contingent upon conscious readerly attention to that process, the workings of which are often assumed to be natural? The increased investigations of the operation of (inter)textuality by cultural theorists are constantly peeling away layers of textuality and intertextuality that have been assumed to be natural, demonstrating the possibility that all texts are complex intertextualities rather than discrete units. For instance, the material text of *The Hand that Signed the Paper* has not changed, but the cultural, political and theoretical intertexts with which we now read that material text have so changed our readings of the book that it does not appear to be the same text as it was prior to the disclosures about its author's identity, and her methods of creating intertextual writing.

The copyright laws that surround ownership of texts continue to be a legal dilemma for those involved in the production of material intertextual works, but they cannot really affect the virtual texts created by reader/viewers. Roland Barthes proposes that texts are re-written on readers during the reading process. He writes,

> a text is ... a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writing, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture ... The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination. Yet this destination cannot any longer be personal: the reader is without history, biography, psychology; ... [s/he] is simply that someone who holds together in a single field *all the traces* by which the written text is constituted.(156-57 [emphasis added])

Language could not be understood if readers did not inter-relate phrases read with other phrases read, and those intertextualities with the myriad (inter)texts that are apprehended throughout readers' lives. It would be almost impossible for any reader, however, except those with flawless memories (the mythical "ideal reader" who exists only in theoretical texts), to hold together every single thing that constitutes a material text, "all the traces." Readers' minds will vary in their abilities to interact with texts, and in their abilities to remember texts. These factors will necessarily affect the degree of intertextual blurring that will take place as readers create virtual texts. Virtual intertextual readings created during any process of reading may differ vastly from the material texts from which they derive. A text's unity cannot be guaranteed when it arrives at its destination. A reader is a vast repository of virtual texts with which any material text, and any of its traces, may intertext at any time after its inscription upon the space of any reader, thus mutating even at the moment of being read, and continuing to do so thereafter.

As intertexts are woven into new material texts by author/artists, or into new virtual texts by reader/viewers, those intertexts produce kaleidoscopic effects, and as texts are constructed, or read, from different intertextual points of view, new perceptions and new meanings come to light. In "The Bounded Text," for instance, Kristeva writes,

> [t]he text is ... a productivity, and this means: first, that its relationship to the language in which it is situated is redistributive (destructive-constructive) ... and second, that it is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality: in the space of a given text, several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and *neutralize* one another.(36 [emphasis added]).[24]

Like Johnson and Barthes, Kristeva metaphorises reading and textuality as spatial. By using words like "space" and "neutralize," Kristeva's ideas about the terms textuality

and intertextuality again utilise metaphors of text-world as "territory," rather than free space or unstable unowned entity. By "neutralize" Kristeva might mean that intertexts neither belong to their original contexts nor to the contexts into which they have been placed. To follow this argument, any (inter)texts that can be recognised as "alien" in *Voss* are in a sort of limbo within the new text, in a state of no-context. Or, Kristeva's use of the term "neutralize" might mean that any intertexts in *Voss* – Sidney Nolan's art, Rimbaud's poetry, or the Bible – no longer belong to their texts-of-origin, but are now "citizens" of *Voss*. I would prefer, however, to think of intertexts and any new text as being in a state of flux in which the flow of meanings and/or perceptions are moving from virtual-intertextual-collage (which indicates enmeshment of new text and its intertexts) to the intertexts' other contexts, and via the new text to a modified virtual-intertextual-collage, and so on, as many times as the reverberation makes sense to any reader. Any virtual-intertextual-collage is an enmeshment of texts and intertexts in which meanings and perceptions are vibrating. New texts, intertexts in their various contexts (including any new contexts), and virtual-intertextual-collages are alternately and/or sporadically foregrounded, moved to background positions, and/or erased in a reading activity that is incapable of being traced in all its intricacies of motion, intersections, and erasures. There is not potential for flux in essentially stable texts, then, but potential for moments of stability in inherently unstable intertextual relationships. The flux can be suspended by readerly volition or by any of many other circumstances. I refer to these pauses in the reading process, during which textual flux abates, as ™interim conclusions™ or ™transient moments.™

The process of reading intertextually can also be stopped by deliberate readerly strategy. While the resonances that operate between new texts and intertexts are capable of transforming all those (inter)texts, readers can suspend knowledge of any intertexts in order to view a work without their reading/viewings of that work being influenced by information about its intertexts. In such instances, intertexts temporarily and theoretically enjoy the status of no-context, or solely new-context, and the dynamic interaction between text and intertexts ceases for a time. It is integral to the theory of intertextuality that during acts of deliberate reading, readers can choose not to

intertext with certain texts, whether virtual or material. Jean Lescure, for instance, argues that "[k]nowing must ... be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge" (Bachelard xxviii - xxix). It is desirable then, for the strategy of reading intertextually to be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget intertextuality. This means that a textual boundary is deliberately enforced during the activity of reading, that the porous boundary becomes impermeable for a time. There will be variations in readers' abilities to practice, as reading strategies, the art of both deliberate suspension of knowledge and readerly (inter)textual filtering.

I am choosing not to intertext with a vast amount of feminist and psychoanalytic theory in relation to subjectivity – texts that have the potential greatly to alter my readings of intertextuality. This fact is merely to delimit my investigation of this subject area for now, but knowing that an enormous intertext is being deliberately edited from this thesis gives me a greater sense of freedom to write within the parameters I have set. Intertextual variations of this thesis can be created at a later date, by intertexting this text with the theories of feminism and psychoanalysis. In a sense, this text is always already an intertextual variation that has not yet been made. We do not have to intertext our reading or writing of texts with all potential intertexts, that would be an impossibility. There is always the possibility, however, that other readers, writers and text-producers (including ourselves) may intertext any of many (inter)texts with our work, thus enabling new meanings for the texts we create.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari postulate that, "[a] book is an assemblage ... [l]iterature is an assemblage ... A rhizome [rhizomic text] has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things" (4, 25). Deleuze and Guattari want metaphors for writing that allow written works to be described as maps, not tracings:

> [t]he map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation ... A map has multiple entryways, as opposed to the tracing, which always comes "back to the same." The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged "competence." (12-13)

Maps are well-suited to describing the intertextualities between written text and written text, image and image, and image and written text, and the relationships of all those artificially-produced material signifiers with the material world that is not "artificially" produced; as they are perceived in varying ways by different reader-viewers.[25] Intertextualities cannot be traced. They cannot even be mapped for long, as they are always in states of process, flux and motion.

I propose that the material texts of books comprise the processes of material textual production (including the creatorly interaction of its author/s with that text); public versions of authorial identity, including such things as alleged race, gender and political persuasions (particularly those either printed on the body of the book or in publicity promoting the book); paper; print; signifiers; punctuation; covers; titles; epigraphs; cover illustrations; genre expectations; marketing forces; and availability and cultural placement of those books. The material texts of visual art-works comprise the process of material production (including the interaction of its creators/s with that art); public versions of authorial identity, including such things as alleged race, gender and political persuasions (particularly those either printed on exhibition catalogues or in publicity promoting an exhibition in which the paintings appear); canvas, board, paper or other chosen surface; enamels, oils and/or other applied media; signifiers; title; expectations set up by various genres and textual media; marketing forces; public accessibility to the works; and cultural placement of the artefacts. Virtual texts include varying degrees of human perceptions and understandings of everything that comprises material texts, and the ways in which readers assimilate material texts during the process of reading intertextually.

Throughout this study I intertext creative intertextualities of ideas about intertextuality with other ideas about intertextuality. Transience, flux, process, and movement are all words that apply to texts as they are read or viewed intertextually. Video or computer graphics could represent these (inter)textual processes far more effectively. Undoubtedly the time for multi-media production of doctoral theses is near. But accompanying every form of discussion about intertextuality, even that in the form of multi-media production, there will always be a vast repository of other

intertextualities over which the assembler of the material text has no control: the unknown myriad virtual-intertextual-collages stored within every reader.

Ned Kelly, 1955 (fig. 11).

list of written epigraph sources

epigraphs that precede the table of contents
"Where is the politician who will flower" (White, *PWS* 24).
"I had a boat and poet" (*SNLL* 40).
prologue I
"I feel an affinity" (Cixous, 1).
prologue II
"We are witnessing" (Restany 711).
"[T]here is truth" (Seitz 72).
intersection
"It seems a strange thing" (Deely xvii).
the intertextuality of ideas about intertextuality
"One need not be a chamber" (Dickinson 168-9).
"Who will provide us" (Frame, *Faces* 9).

notes

[1] Epigraphs without exact scholarly references can emit poetic textual resonances that enable readers to sense an intermingling of all texts. There is a freedom to follow the epigraph, or not. Epigraphs can act as mysterious texts. Their authors are known, but their exact textual addresses are not provided at the site of the epigraph. I want the epigraphs in this thesis to operate both as epigraphs and as scholarly references. All references to written epigraphs are cited in a *list of written epigraph sources* that precedes the *notes* for each section. The requirements of scholarly citation of sources is thereby fulfilled, while also allowing the mystery of uncited epigraphs to resonate in the body of my writing. See page pp. 148-49 of this thesis.

[2] I use the words *describe* and *description* rather than *define* and *definition* when referring to the range of meanings attributed to terms in this thesis. I want to avoid the notion of essences, as I see words as part of a signic flux, as unstable entities. I see what is signified by words as transient and affected by cultural contexts, intertexts, textual contexts, and individual readings. It would be illogical, therefore, for me to attempt to fix the meanings of words by "defining" terms. See discussion on pp. 306-309 of this thesis.

[3] I describe inter-imaging as the intertextuality of images and/or texts that foregrounds the resultant inter-images or inter-surfaces rather than the intertextual enmeshment of contents. In both intertextuality and inter-imaging there will be a variety of movements from surfaces to contents and back to surfaces, but inter-imaging allows for a greater degree of consideration of surfaces and inter-surfaces. Because we are trained to read the surfaces of images as less intellectually engaging then their contents, and because the surfaces of written texts are considered to be mere sign-posts, we tend to move directly towards the contents of texts. See discussion on pp. 229-230 of this thesis.

[4] By new text (or primary text) I mean to infer any text that is being considered as the focus for intertextual exploration. The category of new text is always arbitrary and shifting, depending upon which text has been chosen as the new text (either by a reader, or by a textual analyst). With chronology of production being inconsequential to readers an older text can feasibly be the focus (or the *new text*) for an intertextual reading with intertexts that chronologically post-date the (older) text's production. See p. 27 of this thesis.

[5] I do not wish to introduce the mind-body argument into this study. I use the term *mind*, here, to indicate "readerly space," which I later also refer to as "virtual space."

[6] When discussing intertextuality, I find it useful to distinguish between the "material text" (that is exterior to the reader's being), and the text that is created by "that faculty of the mind by which are formed images or concepts of external objects not present to the senses ... sometimes called the "reproductive imagination"" (*OED*). Because the word imagination is overly laden with theoretical implications, however, I have named the operation of this type of imaginative re-creation of an absent text, a virtual text, rather than an imaginative text. And because calling the space in which that text exists "mind space" can introduce the mind-body argument, I have called the space, virtual space. See pp. 17-21 of this thesis.

[7] This is an appropriation of "I am for an art that is political-erotical-mystical, that does something other than sit on its ass in a museum" (Oldenburg 728).

[8] Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*, ed. David Lodge, London: Longman Group, 1986, 652-660.

[9] The inter-imagery between "[t]he morning that followed the storm was set in a splendour of enamels" (*Voss* 258) and *Central Australia*, 1950 (fig. 44) is further explored on pp. 245, 247 of this thesis.

[10] One of the descriptions of *imagination* offered by the *OED*.

[11] There will be times, of course, when a text is present both virtually and materially, most particularly when a material text is in the process of being read.

[12] I use the words *reader* and *viewer* interchangeably to denote a person who is interacting with any text.

[13] A material text is materially absent if a reader moves a certain distance away from that text, or destroys that material text. A material text can become *virtually* materially absent (even if the text is still in the hands of a reader), when its materiality is no longer being regarded by that reader. In such a case it might as well be materially absent because its reader is remembering the text (and probably integrating that text with other virtual intertexts), rather than looking at that material text.

[14] I have chosen not to intertext with the vast array of theories of subjectivity, however, in order to delimit my exploration of intertextuality. Because exploring the process of reading intertextually involves analysis of intertextual relationships that are continually shifting, to have both material texts *and* virtual texts in a state of flux is enough instability for this investigation. I believe that intertexting the flux of readerly subjectivity with this study would be premature. I want one entity in the reading process to be assumed as relatively stable, even while knowing that it is not.

[15] White wrote to Nolan, "Your 'Chain Gang in Galaxy' has impressed all the people I wanted to impress – impress is the wrong word, because it has made them visibly enthusiastic – whereas all the dead-heads have recoiled, and that too, is how it should be" (*Letters* 258). "At first sight 20 Martin Road seemed more like a gallery than a house. The dining room and sitting room ... made one long space hung with paintings dominated by Nolan's huge blue canvas called *The Galaxy*. This was a birthday present from the painter and White saw it as convincing proof that his friend was 'our greatest *creative* painter.' The most familiar photograph of Patrick White from these years – it first appeared on the jacket of *The Burnt Ones* [in both the E & S and the Viking editions] – shows him sitting in a sports coat and tie in front of Nolan's swirls, the ghost of a smile on his proud face (*PW* 445 ["our greatest ... painter" commented to Geoffrey Dutton, i.vi.1964]).

[16] This intertextuality is discussed on pp. 67-68 of this thesis.

[17] Stanley Fish argues that the very existence of any sort of text of material production "is a function of an interpretive community" (240). Intertextual readings involve an interplay between texts that exist in material spaces outside individual readers, material spaces that intertext with readerly communities, and virtual spaces that are both individual and that intertext with readerly communities. E-mail lists constitute readerships that push the boundaries of virtuality as regards texts, intertexts, readers, communities of readers, and the readings that emerge from those spaces. The flux of the space I call "virtual readerly space" is becoming increasingly mirrored in the realm of material textual spaces as technological constraints on what is able to be achieved in material textual spaces lessen.

[18] Humpty Dumpty actually says, "When *I* use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean" (Carroll 274).

[19] "Nineteenth- and twentieth-century poets suffer from a particularly acute 'anxiety of influence' or sense of 'belatedness.' Overcoming this disablement entails a creative 'misreading' or 'misprision' of the precursor by the 'ephebe' or aspirant poet, a licence Bloom extends to 'strong' critics, such as himself. (It is this blurring of the usual hierarchical distinction between creative and critical writing that constitutes Bloom's common ground with the deconstructionists.) This theory of poetic revisionism is elaborated in a complex and esoteric terminology drawn from classical rhetoric and the Jewish mystical traditions ... and produces readings of ... poetry that oscillate between the brilliant and the bizarre" (Lodge, *Modern Criticism* 240). Bloom writes, "the poet-in-a-poet is desperately obsessed

with poetic origins ... [but] [p]oetic influence, in the sense I give to it, has almost nothing to do with verbal resemblances between one poet and another" (246, 248). Bloom says that "poetic influence is necessarily misprision ... [and] [p]oetic influence ... works in the depths [on all levels of the poetry]" (248).

When Bloom refers to "misprision" the emphasis seems to be that the misreading is built into the textuality of the poem by the poet's anxiety. The misprision to which I refer, however, is reader-initiated. Intertextuality liberates readings from the search for the poetic influence of poetic "father/s" and moves the emphasis to the inter-mingling of one text and an "other" within readerly space, using as little or as much knowledge about the author/s as any reader desires.

[20] "*Lightning field*, finished in 1977 ... occupies part of a valley floor in New Mexico 200 miles south-west of Albuquerque ... It consists of four hundred stainless-steel poles, each sharpened to a needle tip, their spikes forming a level plain (like an enormous bed of nails) one mile long and one kilometre wide, the grid spaced with absolute regularity to a tolerance of one-sixteenth of an inch. Any one of these poles can, in theory, act as a lightning conductor in the electrical storms that often burst over that part of the desert ... When the sun is high, the poles seem to disappear" (Hughes, *Shock* 398).

[21] I have chosen the semiotic graphic ™ to designate *transient meanings* or *transient moments* in readerly interaction with texts and their intertexts because of its official meaning, "Trademark," which conveniently alludes to the uniqueness of each of these sets, and the personal ownership of the sets. Because meanings, perceptions, contents and surfaces are in continual flux, I prefer to use this symbol to mean *transient moments* (rather than *transient meanings*) so as not to delimit what sort of readerly interaction is taking place. See pp. 219-220 of this thesis.

[22] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest that one possible inter-relationship between a text and a reader's mind is like that of the wasp-orchid and the wasp. The analogy of becoming-other is a way of describing what happens during the process of intertextual reading that is fertile with suggestivity. See discussion on pp. 309-314 of this thesis.

[23] Advertising plays a powerful role in breaking down assumed contexts for texts and their intertexts (including the context of ownership), but a comprehensive study of advertising and its effect on (inter)textuality requires another study.

[24] "Neutralize: ... [t]o render neutral ... to render ineffective by an opposite force or effect ... [t]o exempt or exclude (a place) from the sphere of war-like operations" (*OED*).

[25] The material world, that is not artificially produced (including entities such as trees) is of course "produced" by readers when they intertext with that world during the reading process. An actual material *tree* becomes a virtual intertextual reading of a tree in readerly space. My distinction is artificial, but necessary as an intertextual reading strategy.

> I invented the colour of the vowels! – A black, E white, I red, O blue, U green – I regulated the form and movement of each consonant, and, with instinctive rhythms, I prided myself on inventing a poetic language accessible some day to all the senses. I reserved translation rights.
>
> Sometimes I see in the sky endless beaches covered with white joyous nations. A huge golden vessel, above me, waves its multi-coloured flags in the morning wind. I have created all celebrations, all triumphs, all dramas. I have tried to invent new flowers, new stars, new flesh, new tongues.
> Rimbaud

the language of White and Nolan

Both White and Nolan struggled with the broad medium in which they were working, the pansemiotic medium of art. They wanted to make art that would speak of the world in which they found themselves. They wanted to make textual productions in languages that would also speak of the land in which they had lived their childhoods, and with which their art had become most associated. Their art, however, was not simple mimesis of place, history, or life. They desired to create spaces in which Australia could become part of the interconnectedness of all things, rather than existing solely as a colonial construct; and where the world could be read in ways that would make geographical location both culturally-coded and capable of operating on the level of metaphor. Both men were working at a time when many artists were struggling with the idea of language, with the ways in which signification could be achieved, and with ideas about transcending place, culture and time.

White and Nolan wanted both to mythologise, and to de-mythologise. Their texts engage with the British and white Australian colonisation of aboriginal people, and with the enforced transportation of convicts to Australia. Their art intertexts with the art and histories of Europe in ways that encourage intertextual reading so that readerly appropriation, revision and subversion of those European texts can occur, rather than a passive readerly embracing of European texts as sites of cultural supremacy, that place Australia in "perpetual and flagrant violation of reality" (Hazzard 31). This study engages with official histories of Australia in order to provide contexts from within which to view the art of White and Nolan, but I also argue that the art of both men is itself important historiographic practice; that all historiographic practice is inevitably an immense, moving intertextual collage; and that histories – as much as artistic and other discursive practices – are constructions. White and Nolan were both

map-makers as well as artists who remained relatively fixed within their respective disciplines. Their maps can be read as interweaving irony, seriousness of intent, art, historiography, political comment, poetry, transgression, appropriation, revision, autobiography, and many other practices that are involved in the production of material texts. Readers therefore have ample opportunity to invent, provide intertexts, deconstruct, and reconstruct, as they read the works of White and Nolan.

White was a great collector and promoter of Australian art and many artists have affected White's writing.[1] I do not mean to imply that Sidney Nolan is *the* artist, Australian or otherwise, whose art most often intersects with White's work, or that White is *the* writer, or even *the* Australian writer, whose works most often form intertextualities with those of Nolan. Significant studies could be made of the intertextualities of both men's works with many other artists and writers. The artists' interest in one another's works rose and fell over the years, and was at its height, perhaps, when Nolan formally accepted White's Nobel Prize on the author's behalf in 1973. White said of Nolan's 1967 Retrospective at the Art Gallery of New South Wales:

> [i]t was staggering to see all the imaginative and painting genius [sic] that has poured out of one man. It has made the retrospective of other Australian painters seem quite trivial and pathetic – and yet there are still people here who will not admit that he can paint. To me this has been the greatest event – not just in painting – in Australia in my lifetime. It has made up for a lot if not all the bitterness for having been dug out of this pit. (*PW* 475)

White calls Nolan a genius, and in asking Nolan to accept his Nobel Prize in 1973, he can be read as aligning the painter with his own alleged genius.

A bond of friendship and artistic respect existed between the two men for many years before their very public feud after White's release of *Flaws in the Glass.* The biographical (and autobiographical) texts of the artists' lives have formed part of the intertextualities investigated in this study, as it is impossible fully to separate the texts made about artists' lives from the texts that are written or painted by those artists. Cultural studies might be made of the intertextuality between "The Nolans" from *Flaws in the Glass*; Nolan's painting, *Nightmare*, 1982; and various media reports, interviews, and other texts based on the disagreement that was sparked by

White's comments about Nolan, and Nolan's response to those comments. Undoubtedly, conclusions about the nature of Australian identity could be drawn by studying those intertexts, and much of the writing about the affair is entertaining in itself, but I have chosen to allow such cultural studies to remain as potential intertexts with this study because I don't find texts written about the incident useful when attempting to construct text-based readings of the works I have selected to investigate in this study.[2] In section four of this thesis, however, the event is visited briefly when it intertexts with some works that form part of Nolan's responses to Rimbaud's *Illuminations.*

According to White's literary agent, Barbara Mobbs, Penguin's decision to change all the covers of White's works to illustrations by Mel Odom in the early 80s was entirely driven by market forces, and was not related to the fact that White and Nolan had argued.[3] Mobbs reports that stocks of several of White's books were low, and that the new cover illustrations were commissioned by Penguin for all its new editions.[4] The same artist, Mel Odom, was invited to provide illustrations for all White's books in order to achieve a unified look. The change of cover-illustrations, however, effectively eradicated the use of Nolan illustrations for any of White's works. I discuss the artistic and epigraphic implications of this change in sections two and four of this thesis.

Both Nolan and White have been drawn into the halls of fame and infamy in Australia. Nolan has been constructed as a cultural hero-artist by the media-machine; and he is also periodically presented as the hoaxster anti-hero who made good by pulling the wool over the eyes of his viewers (Ryan 87). Today Ned Kelly is almost synonymous with Sid Nolan, and both figures are firmly grounded in certain cultural codings of Australia. Elwyn Lynn's book *Sidney Nolan – Australia* has an enlarged (but not widely known) Ned Kelly head beneath the words of the title (fig. 12), firmly fixing together the three entities: Nolan, Kelly and Australia. Albert Tucker has also published a series of portraits in *Faces I have met.* These portraits of Nolan, along with those of many people who were at Heide in the 1940s, codes Nolan as a national

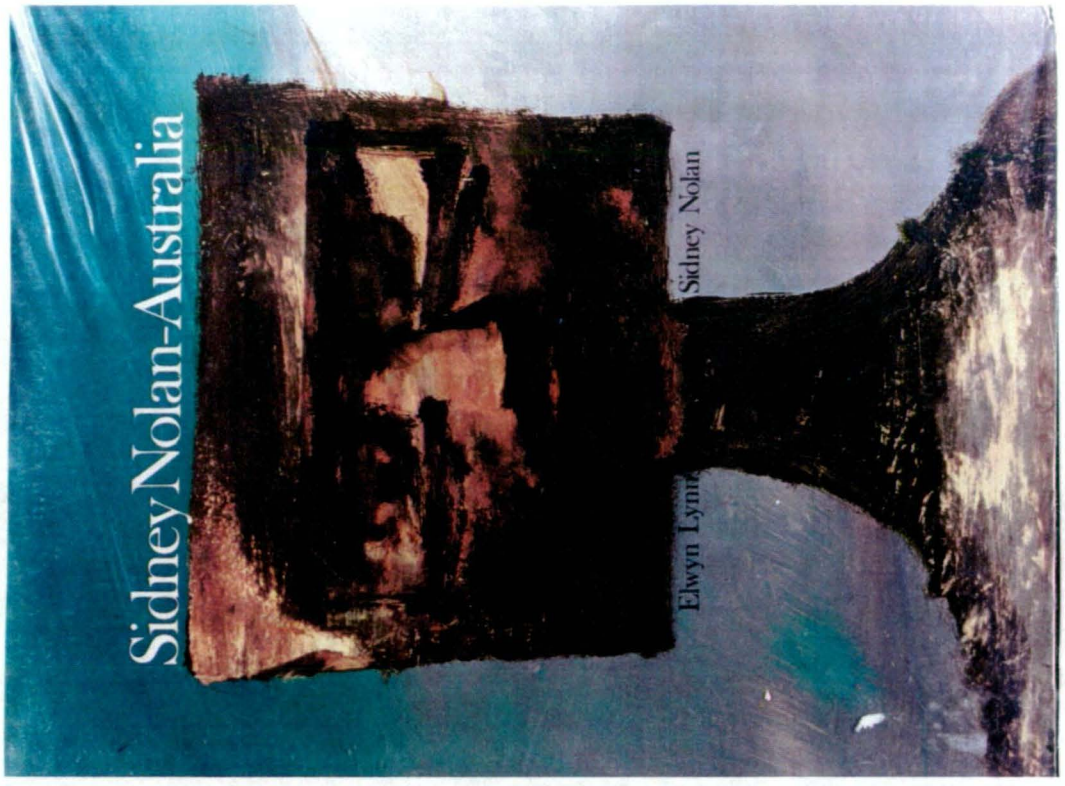


Figure 12 – Detail from top left hand corner of *Kelly in Landscape*, 1969, oil on hardboard, 91.5 x 122 cm, Marlborough Fine Art, London, page 159 of *SNA*. Detail used as cover illustration for *SNA*.

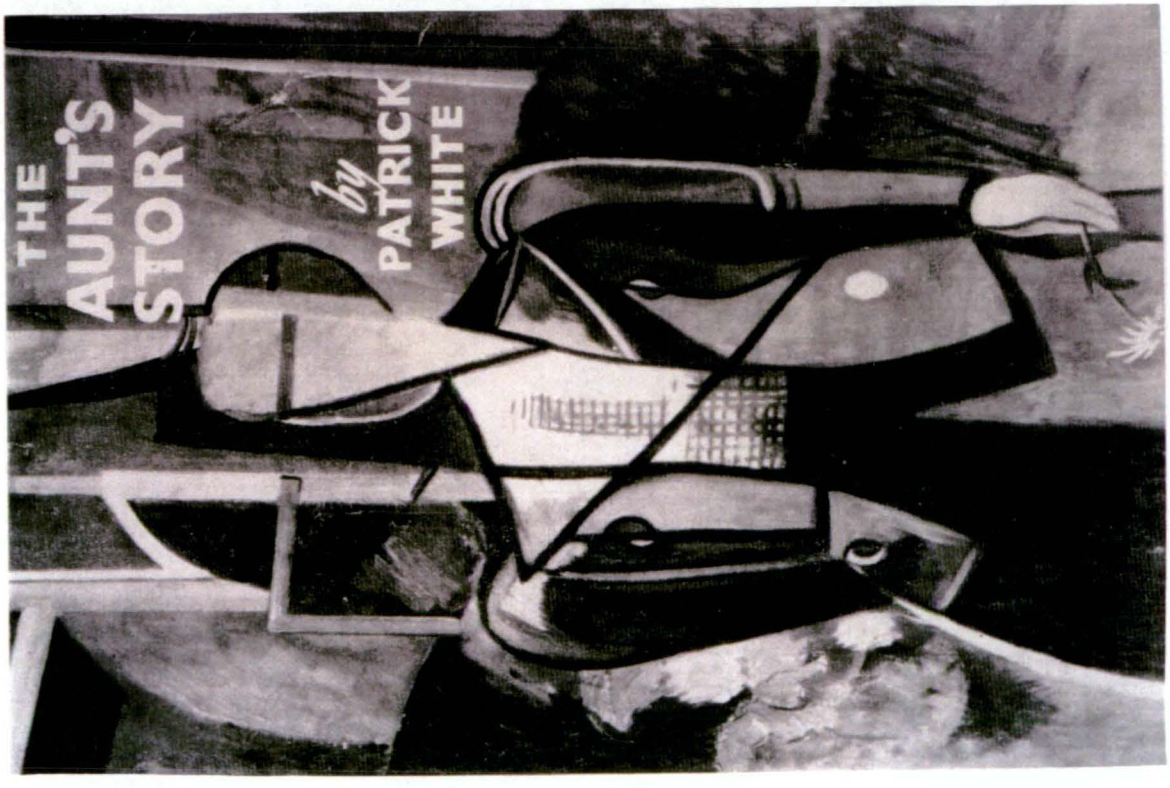


Figure 13 – Roy de Maistre, *The Figure in the Garden (the Aunt)*, 1945, used for the 1948 E&S edition of *The Aunt's Story*.

icon.[5] The translation of White into cultural hero has not been as easy a transition, but his Nobel Prize is remembered often enough to remind us that this Australian novelist is internationally acclaimed, no matter what we may think (or know) of his writing, nor what may be reported about his behaviour. White is venerated in paintings by both Roy de Maistre and Brett Whitely. Since his death, David Marr's biography and a selection of White's letters, along with William Yang's book of photographs, Sharman's television documentary, *The Burning Piano*, and Simon During's critical review, have all contributed to continuing the Patrick White industry, which is largely driven by academies in Australia.[6]

When discussing the language of Patrick White and Sidney Nolan, there will always be Australian contexts from within which to view their works, and there will always be texts about "Australia" with which their works intertext. The common threads of nationality, history and common personal interests often lead to intertextualities between the two *oeuvres* as they both intertext with texts derived from the same time and place in history. Intertextual readings concentrated around contexts of national identity and place, however, can be limiting. In 1994 Nolan's *Ned Kelly* series was exhibited in New York. Ingrid Periz writes the following criticism of the way the exhibition was presented as an Antipodean history surrounded by maps, historiographic utterances, and artefacts borrowed from Australian museums:

> [a]sked why Australian art appears so little known outside this country Betty Churcher opined that the paintings appear to lose "something of their soul in international transit" ... If the distinctiveness of non-indigenous Australian art is indeed so fragile, perhaps the rubric of a national specificity, the old bogey of identity is best abandoned in favour of other criteria. Australian art might be better served internationally if freed from the burden of announcing Australia to the world. (Periz 201)

As I research the connections between the works of the two men, I find considering their works outside national contexts can lead to readings that have not been usually explored by Australian critics. The cultural constructions with which I am most familiar are those which are Australian, however, and therefore, even when I am attempting to make my readings devoid of specific cultural intertexts, I acknowledge that they will usually be present in my readings to some extent.

The textual media in which White and Nolan constructed their texts was ever-present in their thoughts, and when reading their works outside national, or historical contexts, or the contexts of various other movements of art/literature, intertextual readings that foreground each artist's interest in textual media as language, and the nature of language, become more obvious. Even though White's art is written, White was well known for having wished that he could have been a painter or a film-director. White was frustrated by the greyness of words on paper (*FG* 150). He wrote to Sidney Nolan in 1958:

> It is exciting to think you may do some paintings from *Voss*. I always see most of what I write, and am, in fact, a painter *manqué*. Visually, *The Aunt's Story* is a kind of Klee. Long before it was written I was seeing it in terms of Klee, and after the War, when I began to write it in London there was a tremendous exhibition of Klee's paintings which poured oil on my flames. At the same time I was also much influenced by a painting which I bought then, still own, and of which Roy painted a second version on reading *The Aunt's Story*. (*Letters* 139)

A black and white reproduction of this painting *The Figure in the Garden (the Aunt)*, 1945, was used for the cover illustration of the 1948 E&S edition of *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 13). Productions of White's plays, and his film-script for *The Night, The Prowler*, enable the black-and-white texts White wrote to be transformed into visual works of art. The only two-dimensional visual art I have found published by White is in the margin of *Memoirs of Many in One*, where Alex draws a little Greek Island (*MMO* 73). The visual aspects of words and punctuation were always important to White, however. In 1958 a reviewer complained that "[r]eading the first hundred or so pages of *Voss* is like assisting at some weird rebirth of the English language."[7] Perhaps if the reviewer had known Rimbaud's poetry, and had realised the intertextual connections between Le Mesurier and the French poet, he might not have been as perplexed.[8] A myth had been circulating in Australia that Australian language was the language of realism, however, and many critics demanded that this myth be valorised (Lawson xv-xvi).

Nolan was also criticised by many critics for his failure to represent reality, and Nolan was also an artist who struggled with his textual medium. His art can be read as embodying this struggle. Nolan continually tested the boundaries of "canvas or

board" and "paint" and whatever numerous other media in which (and upon which) he chose to work. Nolan was tempted to become a writer instead of a painter. He considered changing his career several times. He wrote poetry throughout his life, publishing *Paradise Gardens*, a collection of poetry and visual art, in 1971.[9] As well as this change in textual medium, Nolan also experimented with film. Nolan owned the film-rights to *Voss*, but White had power of veto over the director.[10] The film of *Voss* is yet to be made, although Jim Sharman presents scenes from the novel in *The Burning Piano*. Nolan liked to be closely involved with productions of films about his works, and usually appeared in the films. Brian Adams writes that Nolan was often frustrated when attempting to make artistic use of the medium, however, finding that neither he nor the crews with whom he worked could achieve what he desired to see on film (150, 214). This study has not included a detailed account of the intertextuality that operates between filmed, operatic, dramatic, or other translations of White and Nolan's works and their written or static visual art-works. *The Burning Piano*, however, is explored as one site of filmed intertextuality that includes art by both men. The art-works of both White and Nolan seem to want to burst out of the confines of their communicative media, "to invent new flowers, new stars, new flesh, new tongues" (*Rimbaud* 207).

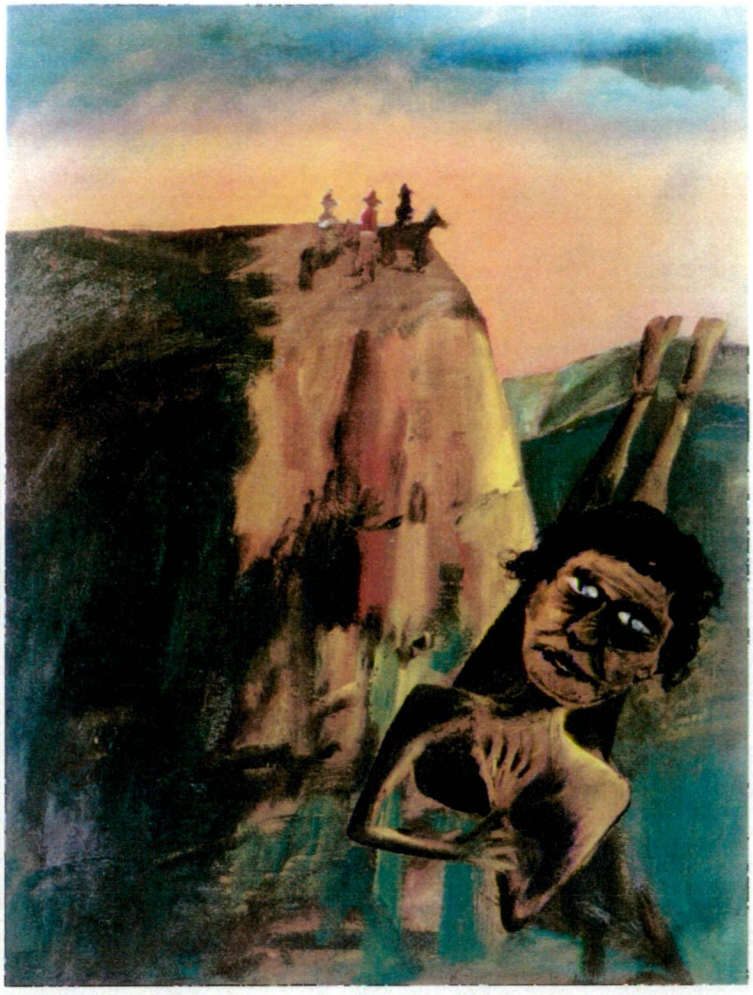
We usually think of translators as people who transform one set of signifiers into another type of signifying set in order to relay the same messages of content to people who are unable to understand the first set of signifiers. White and Nolan wanted more than that. They wanted to escape from the confines of what had been done before. In Rimbaud's words, they wanted to be "absolutely modern" (*Rimbaud*).[11] Or, even more than that, they wanted to escape into those textual places that they had either dreamt or had apprehended in hallucinations. Both artists followed Rimbaud (and others), to varying degrees, in their quests to escape conventional language forms by exploring the uttermost extremities of their beings, using various means of investigating biochemically altered psycho-physiological states. The works of White and Nolan can be read as attempts to translate both Australia and the world into places not previously attempted by either Australian or international artists.

In translating their imaginative apprehensions of the world into "new tongues," White and Nolan invented innovative vocabularies. The messages inherent in the languages used by White and Nolan are particularly reliant on the material forms in which they are situated. They are not easily transformed into other textual media. Both artists wanted people to interact with their art-works through the surfaces of their art, not via critical interpretations of their works, nor by reading other artistic translations of their works. They wanted the integrity of their distinctive languages protected. White often fought to stop editors removing words or punctuation from his written works. He also presided over translations of his works into foreign languages (that he understood), lest his meanings be lost, or changed (*Letters* 120-21, 391).[12] White was closely involved with the translation of *The Night, the Prowler* from text to film-script, to film, telling Jim Sharman, "I think film is the most creative medium today. It can be. And that is why I feel if I had had the chance I think I would have liked to begin as a film maker" (30). White also liked to be closely associated with productions of his plays. His association with the translation of *Voss* into an opera was less intense.[13]

The construction of collage texts was part of the artistic vocabulary of both White and Nolan. Both men appropriated pieces of text from various texts, and used them as part of their own language. When works of art are brimming with works by other authors, when the hieroglyphs from which texts are constructed are slippery, those completed works of art (and, even more so, intertextual readings of the works of two such artists) become labyrinths of potential meanings. Even though White and Nolan's works are traversed by well-known intertexts, however, lesser known intertextual windows also abound. And given that glazed windows can also act as mirrors, the overall effect of intertextuality in the works of White and Nolan can become quite psychedelic in its variety of (inter)textual reflections, distortions, and intra-contextual points-of-view, even though the resonances are sometimes only "streams on the rainbow fringe of memory" (Stead 49). To make readerly translations of texts that invite intertextual readings of so many other texts is difficult. The movement from material text to virtual intertextual collage of such texts involves a

great degree of readerly engagement with the texts, and involvement in the reading process. The intertexts become complex vocabularies in themselves.

As well as the enormous degree of intertextuality inherent in their works, the works of both White and Nolan are also self-referential, each artist having developed his own mythography. A Ned Kelly helmet now signifies "Nolan-language" as much as its many other possible readings. Voss is arguably better known than Leichhardt in written Australian historico-iconography. Both artists make use of frequent intra-*oeuvral* intertextuality which serves to heighten this sense of artist-specific vocabulary. Their texts are worlds in which codes are spoken. Both White and Nolan wanted translation rights over those codes. Nolan responded to criticism of the "other worldly" subject matter of *Arabian Tree*, 1943 (fig. 72) by saying that, "[i]t was a segment of *his experience* – 'not a cubby hole for people to fill up with their own imaginings'" (*SNLL* 56). White wanted critics to remember: "that writers and painters often make use of images and situations from real life because they have appealed to them as being beautiful or comic or bizarre," not because they intended to convey symbolic meanings (Herring & Wilkes 140). White often complained that his readers were importing associations and meanings into his works, in ways that he had not intended. The intentions of White and Nolan, however, are no longer intertexts with which readers feel obliged to interact when constructing readings of those artists. Current literary and art theories have placed translation or reading rights firmly into the domain of readers.



Aboriginal Hunt, 1947 (fig. 14).

the translation rights of readers:
reading representations of aboriginal people

The appropriations of aspects of aboriginal culture by both White and Nolan can be read as attempts to contact something essential and transcendent in aboriginal spirituality, something that can be Australian without having been imported from Europe. This use of aboriginal iconography can be read as modernist appropriation of that culture in order to make those who inherit the genocide (and also the wealth and land) of their forebears, less uncomfortable with that inheritance. By drawing aboriginality into white-man's art, white Australians can consider themselves as somehow emanating spiritually from that aboriginal space, as official inheritors of land and all that it contains. Reading the appropriations of White and Nolan from within their historical contexts, however, we must acknowledge that neither artist had access to the cultural codes of political correctness to which artistic and other discursive

practices aspire today. In the 1990s neither White nor Nolan might have represented aboriginal people and culture for fear that their texts might be misconstrued. Given that we cannot know their motives (without doubt) for making the comments they did make, I would suggest that it is the responsibility of readers to construct the sorts of readings they desire from the texts of White and Nolan. We can read White and Nolan's representations of aboriginality as examples of colonial prejudice and power, or as pioneer attempts to discuss our society's various depictions of its improper and unjust treatments of aboriginal people. Prior to artists such as White and Nolan most of those depictions had ranged from denials or misrepresentations of the injustices committed, to total silence. There were exceptions of course, but official histories were not often among them. Nolan's *Aboriginal Hunt*, 1947 (fig. 14) acts as a poignant defence of this argument.

The readings I make in this section are anachronistic intertextual readings that assume White and Nolan's works are attempts at politically correct criticism. There are no objective truths about the texts of White and Nolan, however, in relation to the degree of their political "correctness." Hans Robert Jauss writes that:

> the history of the arts, since the beginning of their scientific consideration at the time of Renaissance Humanism, was so matter-of-factly understood to be the history of works and their authors, that the question of the third party, the reader or public, was not expressly posed or was relegated to the "unscientific" field of rhetoric ... [Now there is] the possibility of renewing literary history [and by implication the history of all texts] ... by giving it the task of seeking a new understanding of the history of literature [and all texts] as a communicative process between all three parties. (117-8)

Readers subconsciously, and/or semi-consciously, deconstruct, reconstruct, and intertext many texts during any process of reading in order to create intertextual readings. Truth is not necessarily, if at all, hidden inside a text, waiting to be discovered. Texts become multi-layered, multi-faceted aspects of reading processes, the exact workings of which cannot be determined by either their authors, their reader/viewers, or cultural analysts in the societies into which those texts are released. Readings of White and Nolan's works as white patriarchal male art that is "anti-aboriginal" can be read in several ways: as assuming that White and Nolan were unaware of the political implications of their art, as assuming that there is a truth that

underlies art, as supposing that there is only one way in which to read that art, as readings that want to "uncover" authorly intention to make productions of anti-aboriginality, and/or as readerly productions of anti-aboriginality. I want to resist these assumptions.

The intertexts of artists' thoughts with their works, are potential intertexts with all created works, but are unknowable, except via evidence such as letters, speeches, autobiographies, and other such texts that lie outside those works of art. Diagram 2 is one way of demonstrating how the interplay between author, art and reader occurs. (The small circle on the circle of "[m]aterial text A" might be any of many intertexts, including the circle "[c]onversation about text A.") The apprehension of the texts of one another's minds must be mediated via some physical text (even if it is the text of

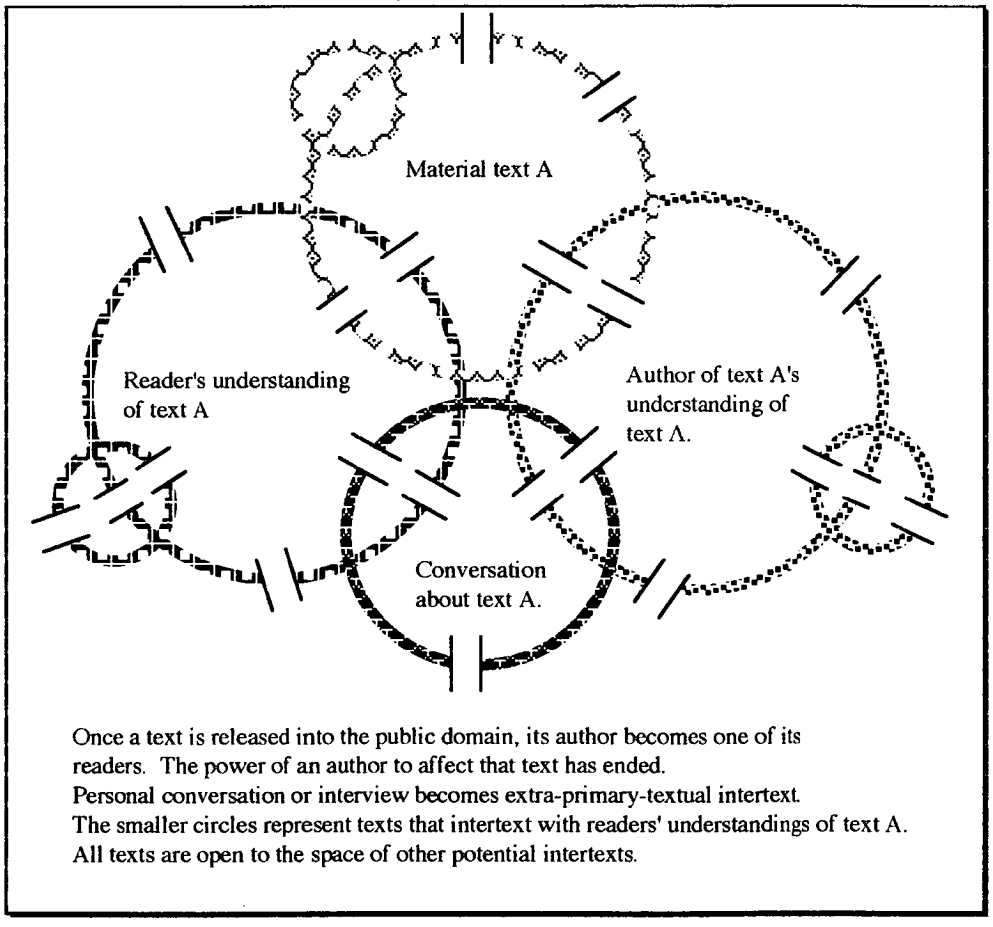


diagram 2

personal friendship and conversation). The readerly apprehension and interpretation of those texts means that there is always the potential for mis-readings and mis-understandings; textual play is inherent in all interactions with texts. Authors become

separate from their texts as their texts are created (even though the acts of creation and editing involve varying degrees of separation). The process of separation becomes even more pronounced once texts that have been "completed" are released into the domain of readers (other than the artist). Once works are released into the public arena, artists and authors can only really interact with their works as readers. If they revise and/or re-release works, the new work is different to the first entity, although it will probably be an intertext.

In diagram 2, both author-reader and (public) reader-critic can interact with Text A, but the only way the (public) reader can interact with the intentions of the author of Text A, is via the intertextuality of that author's other writing (or conversation) about that intention. Readers cannot conclude from Text A what was intended. They can guess, and they may even be correct, but even guessing correctly does not alter the fact that the work is forever unable to guarantee being affected by whatever its author/s intended. Once they have access to a text (even an interview or personal conversation) about the intentions of the author of Text A, readers still cannot conclude that this information is the truth about Text A, nor are they obliged to have intertext such an (inter)text with their reading of Text A. Readings give works life, or rather lives. The smaller circles attached to the circle of both readers in diagram 2, represent texts that intertext with both readers' understandings of Text A; and also texts that might have been written by either author-reader or reader-critic in response to having read Text A. Such texts also intertext with Text A, and may affect how Text A is read intertextually. Intertextual play can be endless.

Julia Kristeva argues that:

> A double approach is ... necessary to deal with the text: it must be seen through the *linguistic* network, but also through *biography*. The proportion of each is already weighted in favour of the *written* element, which nevertheless merely releases, inscribes, and understands "lived experience." (105)

Kristeva is arguing that all written text intertexts with (and cannot be understood without) "lived experience." That lived experience, however, is both that of the author and that of the reader, the most important and under-rated text of which is the lived experience of the reader. It is the lived experience of readers which most often brings

intertextuality to a written text, not knowledge about the lived experience of the author. While intertexting an author's (auto)biography with other text created by the (auto)biographee can lead to vibrant intertextual readings, it is not necessary that art, and other texts of material production, be read in conjunction with the biographies and other writings about the lived experience of those artists. Deliberate wilful suspension of these intertexts can liberate our readings of texts, especially readings of works such as those created by White and Nolan, where both the artists and their texts have been encrusted with years of reading practice that assumes biography, national identity and cultural veneration or denigration of either artist or work, or both, to be a natural part of the reading process.

I read *Glenrowan*, 1946 (fig. 15) as a mocking gesture towards British colonial police. Its depiction of the shiny-buttoned police uniforms is directly mimicked in the tribal markings of the aboriginal warrior. The police-officer to the warrior's right bears a rifle in exactly the same manner as the aboriginal man carries his spear. The painting shows the parallels of ritualism between the colonial police and the human-being who was coded as "primitive" and "uncivilised," at the time of Nolan's painting. Alternatively, pointing to the links between an aboriginal person and a police-officer enables readings to be made of the rights aboriginal people have to enforce their own laws in their own land; their rights to enforce those laws among themselves, and also, as official land-owners, throughout the land.

Miniature aboriginal warriors similar to the figure in *Glenrowan*, 1946 (fig. 15) were commonly sold as souvenirs in Australia at the time this painting was made. *Policeman in a Wombat Hole*, 1946 (fig. 60) has large boomerangs in its background which double as trees. This iconography can be read as illustrating the ways in which indigenous culture was, and still is, appropriated as national identity by Australians.[14] By mimicking the souvenir-type of aboriginal warrior in its depiction of colonial police, Nolan's work suggests that figurines of colonial police-men might equally be marketed as souvenirs of colonial culture. The policemen are effectively robbed of their power, while paradoxically, the aboriginal person is imbued with the power that

Figure 15 – *Glenrowan*, 1946, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 90.4 x 121.2 cm, ANG, page 48 of *SNNK*.

Figure 16 – *Italian crucifix*, 1955, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 91 x 122 cm, page 123 of *SNLL*.

is usually associated with colonial policemen. The painting can be read as both deposing white authority, and/or elevating aboriginal law.

In *Glenrowan*, 1946 (fig. 15), Kelly operates as an anomalous figure who is both man and god. The colour of his face is brown, but a different hue to that of the aboriginal person. He can be read as being the land that was fought over, even though the colonisers had no idea that there was such a thing as "aboriginal land rights."[15] Nolan's image does not solve the problem, however. The land remains a contested site. The image of land as prisoner, or outlaw, can be read as entity imprisoned illegally by colonial power. The work can be read in ways that subvert conventional approaches towards interacting with colonisation, the law, criminality, aboriginality, and the land of Australia. Nolan's works are still able to engage effectively with those issues today. Perhaps we might read the brown face inside Kelly's helmet as aboriginal people caught inside the rigid constructions imposed upon them by non-aboriginal Australians, constructions such as "savages," "slave-labour," "animals," "boongs," "primitives," "criminals," "alcoholics," "people incapable of understanding monetary wealth," "uncivilised," and diminutive cliché aboriginal statues (and all that they imply). The Kelly-helmet enables many metaphoric readings outside the literal reading of helmet as one particular bushranger's armour.

White's portrait of the half-caste Alf Dubbo can be read as revealing the patronising attitudes of Christian mission, and white prejudice towards aboriginal people, as well as revealing the fringe-dwelling culture of urban aboriginal people. White's representation of Alf Dubbo intertexts with Arthur Boyd's representation of half-castes in his *Bride Series* 1957-59.[16] Detailed exploration of that intertextuality, however, would require another study. The irony used by White in his depiction of Dubbo often operates to enable readings that are unexpected. After Alf Dubbo has witnessed the crucifixion of the Jewish Himmelfarb, a bus-conductor asks him if he knows the Jew.

> "No," Dubbo said. "No. I don't. I don't know."
> Because, he saw, with widening horror, it was his nature to betray ...
> Anyway," said the conductor, "these bloody foreigners, the country's lousy with them." (*RC* 435)

An aboriginal person betrays a Jew, and a bigoted Australian bus conductor, of unspecified national origin, complains of "bloody foreigners" to an indigenous Australian whose people have been betrayed by a horde of invading foreigners.

Alf's betrayal of Himmelfarb, the Jewish Christ-figure, however, need not necessarily be read as an instance of conventional fall-redemption theology. We are told in the next passage that "[h]e had even betrayed his secret gift [his artistic ability], but only once, and with that, he knew almost for certain he would make amends eventually" (435). These lines intertext with Nolan's depiction of Christ's head like a painter's palette in *Italian crucifix*, 1955 (fig. 16). Art becomes a god that can be betrayed by the masses, by art-markets, and by artists themselves.[17] In the section entitled "Fate" in *The Burning Piano*, Richard Meale says of White that he, "realised that this country [Australia] was tough, and that it will destroy the artist to a great extent, particularly, I think, at those times." This notion can be read as supporting the idea of the artist as genius, and as suppressed genius. Australia has always varied in its community, corporate, and governmental support towards artists, and in times of economic rationalisation, Nolan's crucified palette, and Alf's fear of betraying both himself, his art, and others, can be read as poignant metaphors for this society's wanton refusal, at times, to embrace art as an important aspect of everyday life.

Voss's delusions of grandeur and his flawed views about aboriginal people can be read as his rampant megalomania, not as the views of White. Voss's megalomania is often juxtaposed uneasily in the novel with images of the explorer as a Christ-figure searching for a following. After Voss gives Jackie his clasp-knife, we are told that Jackie "was shivering with awful joy as he stood staring at the knife on his own palm. [And that] Voss, too, was translated. The numerous creases in his black trousers appeared to have been sculptured for eternity" (171). The clasp-knife intertexts with Nolan's *Jack-Knife Fish*, 1949 (fig. 17).[18] Both Voss's "translation" and Jackie's awful joy intertext with Christ's transfiguration.[19] Voss's translation (in which his trousers appear to have been sculptured for eternity) is also a preview of the fact that he will become translated into sculptured art and legend. Jackie is translated in the presence of his master, but reading the lines intertextually with the image of *Jack-*

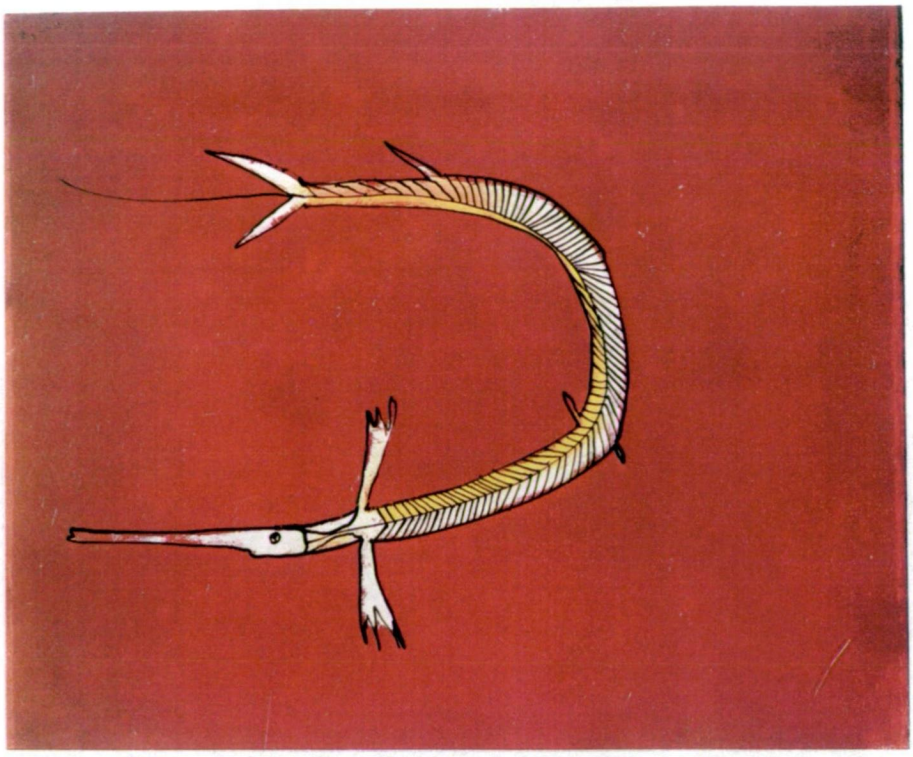


Figure 17 – *Jack-Knife Fish*, 1949, ripolin and ink on back of glass, 30.5 x 25.4 cm, page 102 of *SNA*.

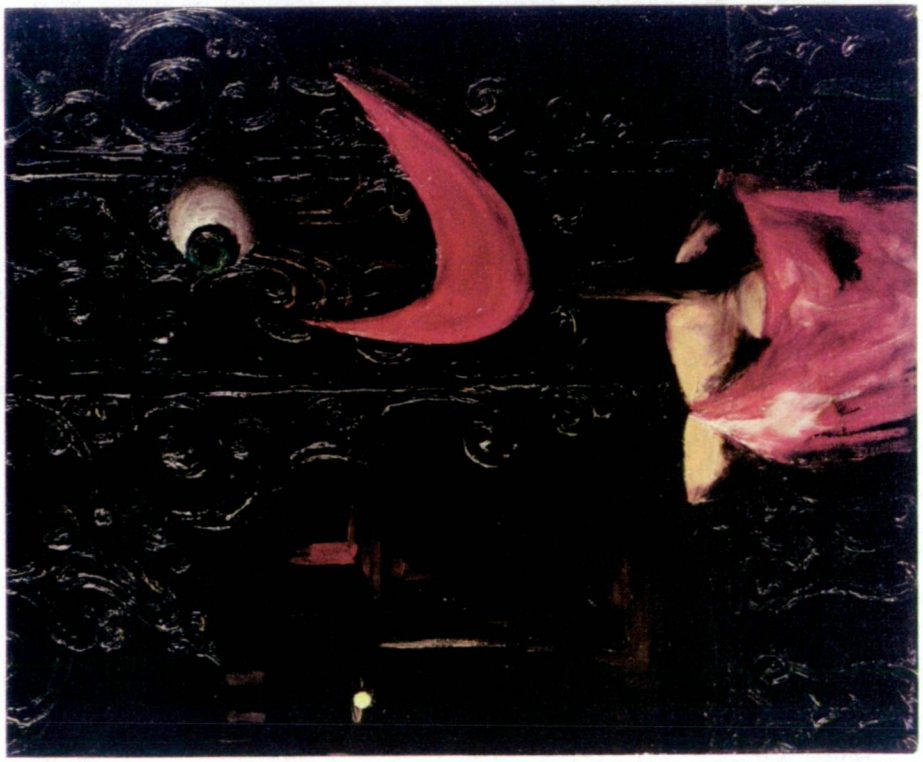


Figure 18 – Albert Tucker, *Image of Modern Evil 24*, 1945, oil on composition board, 64.8 x 53.5 cm, ANG, page 278 of *Surrealism*.

Knife Fish, 1949 (fig. 17), the knife becomes a cultural artefact that will be translated from white culture into black mythology, into aboriginal dialect, into indigenous image. This intertextual reading demonstrates that all texts (and all cultural artefacts) can be read from numerous cultural perspectives.

In *The Burning Piano*, the standard "reader" of White's works is a young educated middle-class aboriginal male, complete with reading glasses. We see this reader laughing at White's ironic depiction of Mrs Jolley as he reads *Riders in the Chariot*. This scene in *The Burning Piano* is closely followed by the reader on a train, either imagining or actually seeing an act of racial violence against an Asian male. This racial violence is enacted while the following words from *Riders in the Chariot* are spoken by Robin Nevin, who plays Mrs Jolley:

> Blue reached down, and yanked the Jew up ... "it is the foreigners that take the homes. It is the Jews. Good old Bluey! let 'im 'ave it! I'll buy yer one when the job's finished" ... Because Blue the vindicator was also Blue the mate. It was possible to practise all manner of cruelties provided that the majority might laugh them off as practical jokes. (*RC* 409, 410, 408)

Sharman's aboriginal reader intertexts with Alf Dubbo who reads Australian society in *Riders in the Chariot* . Both aboriginal men intertext with many recorded facts about bigotry and racial violence towards indigenous people in Australia.

Blanco, who plays the reader, also plays Dubbo when the scene involving the bus conductor is enacted. As the bus sways down the road, the intellectual reader we have seen throughout the documentary begins by silently scanning *Riders in the Chariot*. Robin Nevin's voice reading the text overlays the image of the reader, but when her voice arrives at the description of Dubbo's hands on the chromium bus-rails, the Blanco becomes the demeaned Alf Dubbo, with glazed eyes, betraying his friend, and smiling at the white Australian conductor's words:

> In the steamy, bluish night, he caught the bus for Sarsaparilla. Dubbo knew these parts by heart, both from looking, and from dreaming. He had drawn the houses of Sarsaparilla, with mushrooms brooding inside ...
>
> Dubbo's hands grew slithery on the chromium rail of the empty bus. Ostensibly he was steadying himself. The bus was such a void, the conductor came along at last, and after clearing his throat, condescended to enter into conversation with a black.
>
> The conductor said, extra loud, there had been a fire at Sarsaparilla – some Jew's place ...

> "You know about it? the conductor asked. "Know the bloke perhaps? Worked at Rosetree's?" (434-45)

But for Robin Nevin's voice, the scene between the bigoted bus-conductor interrogating educated aboriginal reader is mute, and directed so that the ambiguous artist-Dubbo becomes a "black," probably drunk, from the inferred point-of-view of the bus conductor. The scene exposes the irony embedded in White's text. The aboriginal bus-rider, who is an artist and a friend of the outcast Jew is unable to be either artist or friend as the bigotry of the bus-conductor intertexts with the bus-rider's fear and apathy. Dubbo becomes what it is expected by that society that he be, a drunk abo. The fact that Nevin literally speaks for both characters heightens the fact that both men are speaking works that are "scripted" for them by society.

In Sharman's documentary, the aboriginal reader seems to have faith in White's art because he is depicted as reading almost every work ever written by White. White would have approved of the representation, but for some readers of cultural studies this representation might be problematic. The film is made by white Australians about the art of Australia's most celebrated white writer. Almost any representation of aboriginal people by white Australian males can be read as patronising. Nolan's image of one aboriginal warrior in *Glenrowan*, 1946 (fig. 15) could be read as drawing an aboriginal person into a comic depiction of colonial Australia, when what actually took place for aboriginal people was genocide. The depictions of aboriginal people by both White and Nolan (and Sharman), however, can also be read as engaging with issues of human rights that had been largely ignored by white Australia. Ambiguous and conflicting readings can only be resolved by readers.

In Mudrooroo's *Dr Wooreddy's Prescription For Enduring The Ending of the World*, Dr Wooreddy is depicted as a learned Doctor, after the style of an intertextuality of western Doctor of Philosophy and Medical Practitioner, who has an anthropological interest in the strange white people invading his land. In *Riders in the Chariot*, Alf also observes the customs of whites:

> Mouths, glittering with paint, would open up in the night like self-inflicted wounds. That, of course, was already familiar, and in another light he would have accepted it along with what he

> sensed to be other tribal customs. Now it was the eyes that disturbed most, of the white people who had always known the answers, until they discovered those were wrong. So they would burst out laughing, or break into little snatches of tinny song. Some of them danced, with open arms, or catching at a stranger. Others fell down, and lay where they were. Or they would lie together on trampled grass in the attitudes of love. (350).

These lines inter-image with Albert Tucker's *Image of Modern Evil 24*, 1945 (fig. 18) and also with Nolan's *Catani Gardens, St Kilda,* 1945 (fig. 19). The inter-imaging highlights the fact that the action is being seen through the eyes of an artist and a cultural observer, and that the action is super-real, or even super-surreal. The desire of some Australian critics to construct texts of realism from the works of White and Nolan, is being subverted at every turn. Their texts constantly intertext and inter-image with other (inter)texts, including reality, in an (inter)textual interplay that is not able to be mapped within reading practices that desire closures.

Hare in Trap, 1946 (fig. 19).

intratextuality

The texts of both White and Nolan invite/enable readings of intra-*oeuvral* intertextuality. I name intra-*oeuvral* intertextuality *intratextuality*, even though the neologism suggests that the intertextuality is occurring within the same text, and not within an entire *oeuvre*. A text that continually refers to the text of itself is displaying intratextual intertextuality, which I also refer to as intratextuality. Intratextuality makes the same text, or texts in the same *oeuvre*, seem as if they are full of mirrors that reflect the textuality of that text or *oeuvre* continually, thereby seeming to increase the textual domain inhabited by that text or those texts. Intratextuality can be read as the attempt by artists continually to make mirror-images of a text's various selves by continually inter-referencing.

All texts are mirrors, to some extent, of readers' lives. In order to read them, we intertext the virtual texts of all other experiences we have had, including those of reading other texts, whether material or virtual. Reading intertextually or intratextually can be interpreted as a desire by readers to find more and more aspects of their individual (and/or culturally constructed) virtual selves mirrored in the texts being

read; as a desire, even, to colonise texts by prior knowledge or ownership of their inter/intratextual vocabulary. Because readers have read certain intertexts or intratexts, and can therefore create virtual textual spaces that may not be known to other readers, that may not even be known to the authors of the texts, they can feel as if they have ventured into textual domains uninhabited by anyone else. Intertexting texts of psychoanalytic theory would undoubtedly lead to invigorating readings of the various operations of intratextuality.

If a text intertexts with an *oeuvre* that has a great degree of intratextuality, the ensuing intertextuality can become especially resonant. When either White or Nolan-texts intertext, a vast array of intratexts are drawn into the intertextual collage. If a reader is already alert to the intratextuality in an artist's work, that reader is more able to draw those intratexts into an intertextual reading with the work of another artist. I use the term intertextuality synonymously with intratextuality (and inter-imaging with intra-imaging), but I sometimes find that pointing to the operation of intratextuality or intra-imaging, as distinct from the wider workings of intertextuality and inter-imaging, helps explain why richly intratextual *oeuvres* are especially resonant when they are drawn into the arena of broad-based intertextuality. I therefore intersperse this discussion with intertextual readings between the works of White and Nolan.

The following lines from *Voss* intratext with *Riders in the Chariot*: "No one would be crucified on any such amiable trees as those pressed along the northern shore" (93). *Voss* is set a century before *Riders in the Chariot*, but imperialist notions of race are shown to be evident throughout the text, and both Palfreyman and Voss are depicted as types of Christ, even though their deaths take place in the desert, and not in Sydney. Their deaths are not so much crucifixions as sacrifices to an Empire's desire to conquer land, to survey it, to draw it into the pages of its history and its economy. Himmelfarb's crucifixion, however, takes place in Sydney on an amiable tree, by a nice bunch of Aussies playing a prank (*RC* 409-10). The notion of crucifixion being represented on Australian soil and/or within the artistic framework of Australian artwork also intertexts with many of Nolan's works (figs. 78, 81, 122).

Figure 20 – *Catani Gardens, St Kilda*, 1945, ripolin and oil on board, 91.4 x 122.1 cm, Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, page 11 of *NL*.

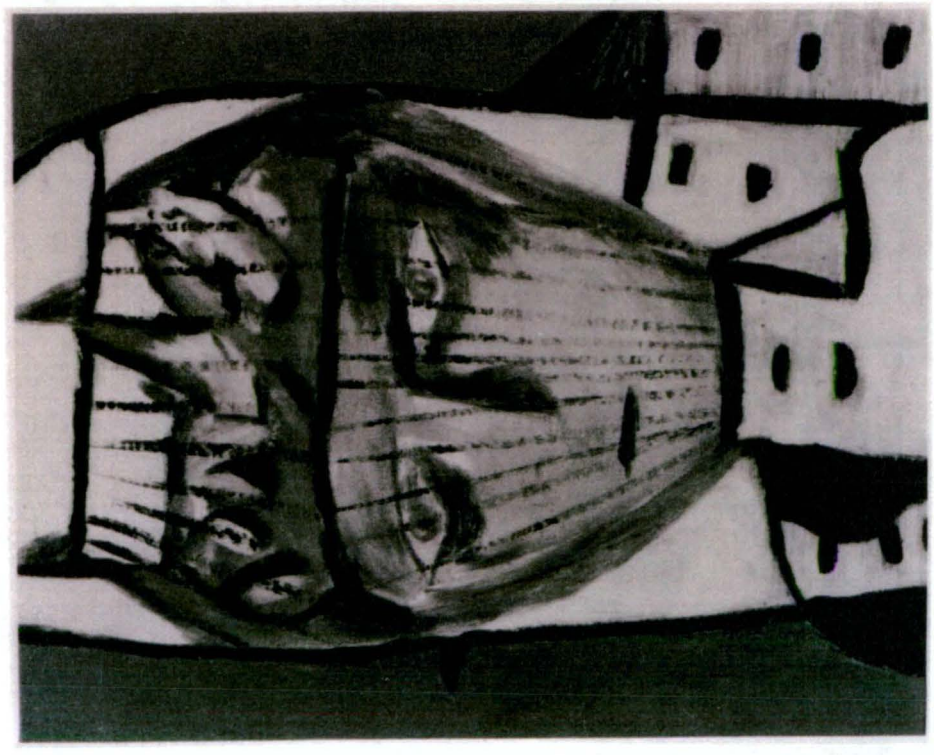


Figure 21 – *Morning Mass*, 1943, ripolin enamel on pulpboard, 76 x 64 cm, Heide, page 46 of *SNLL*.

The spoked hat worn by both Amy Parker and by Miss Hare intratext. "She [Amy Parker] wore a big old straw hat with frayed spokes where the binding had come unsewn ..." (*TTM* 32). "He loved his wife, who was just then coming with the bucket from behind their shack, in the big hat with spokes like a wheel, and under it her bony face" (*TTM* 35). Of Mary Hare it is written, "[h]orrid though her appearance was, all those around her remained rooted in respect. Although the great wicker hat had gone askew, its spokes burnt black, not even Mrs Godbold dared suggest wearer should remove it" (*RC* 432). The idea of spokes also intertexts with classical paintings of saints and martyrs, and Greek and Byzantine icons, with their spoked haloes. The spoked hats also intertext with the hats worn by the figures in both *Morning Mass*, 1943 (fig. 21) and in the Nolan illustration for the 1963 Penguin edition of *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 22). Both these Nolan works form intra-images with *Colonial Head*, 1947 (fig. 23) whose tie has the same spokes emanating from it, suggesting that the man wearing the tie is enclosed in a cage of social convention, not merely clothing. The tie imposes social restrictions, as do the "prison" bar-like renditions of the hat/veils in the images of the women, one on her way to a rigid convention called "mass," and the other, "the aunt," locked into numerous social conventions (in which she cannot remain), the first of which is called "grief" (figs. 21 & 22).

Miss Hare intertexts with the (mad) Hatter and the March Hare in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*; with Rimbaud's lines from *Illuminations*, "[a] hare stopped in the clover and the singing flower bells, and said its prayer through the spider's web to the rainbow" (*Rimbaud* 213); and also with Nolan's *Hare in a trap*, 1946.[20] An image of *Hare in a trap*, 1946 appears on the cover of the ANG's *Memorial Service: Collected Speeches*, in which Mary Nolan says that the image was important to Nolan because for him, it referred to his father working on the land (4). The image also resonates with Nolan's Kelly-helmet. The black steel trap intra-images with Kelly's black steel helmet, which has transmuted into an ugly set of jaws. The hare, which is an imported animal, intertexts with the imported Irish Kelly, the imported semi-Irish Nolan, and the imported colonists in general.

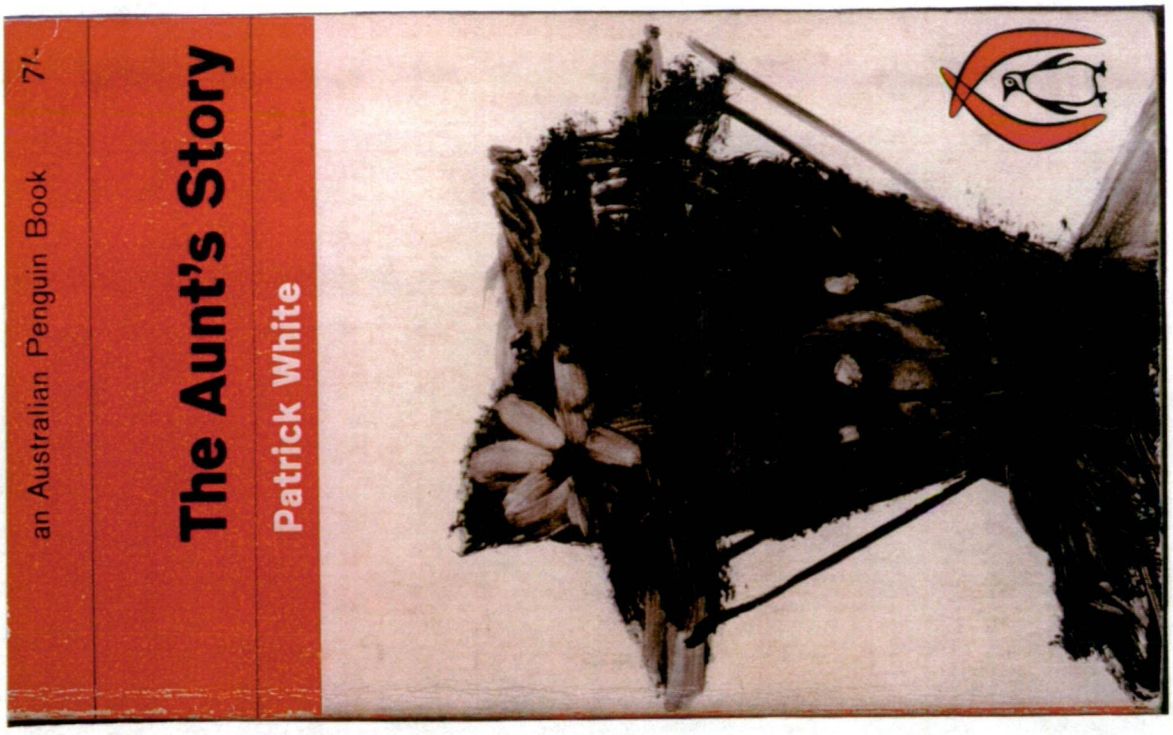


Figure 22 – Cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on inside front cover of *The Aunt's Story*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963.

Figure 23 – *Colonial Head*, 1947, oil on board, 76.2 x 63.5 cm, *Exhibition Catalogue*, London: Waddington Galleries, 1989.

I display a number of Nolan *Kelly*-images in this thesis. There are many more paintings, however, and also many images of Kelly in Nolan's drawings, etchings, screen-prints, and monotypes.[21] Robert Hughes writes

> [i]rrational imagery is a form of discourse which does not simply operate outside the boundaries and structures of reason: it invades them ... Irrational imagery in Australian art really begins with Nolan ... [who became] more and more awake to the disturbing inversions which lyrical art can produce. As Max Harris has pointed out, "... the work of the 1940s shows a total absence of Australian space of national diagnosis." (Hughes, *AA* 150, 154).

The Kelly helmet is the most prominent intratext in Nolan's *oeuvre*, and it is an intratext that moves from historiographic narrative, to irrational imagery, to potential metaphor for a wide range of textualities (including geography), and then back through all those textual possibilities again. The fact that it always refers back to Australian myths (both Kelly and Nolan), however, means that the helmet occupies a peculiarly pivotal position in Australian art. The rectangular shape is sometimes Kelly (or Nolan), sometimes Christ, sometimes canvas or board waiting to be painted, sometimes metaphor for readerly space, sometimes window, as well as having many other potential readings. The rectangle is also the shape of a book or a television screen, thereby invading the textual space of those media-forms as well. Other Nolan intratexts include details such as the fragments of wallpaper that are depicted throughout his *oeuvre* (figs. 113 & 114); the five dots that appear on the uniforms of policemen, the aboriginal warrior in *Glenrowan*, 1946 (fig. 15), and the crown of the peacock in *Alarm*, 1946 (fig. 24); and there are many other Nolan intratexts including the moonboy shape (figs. 145 & 189), convict stripes, and carcasses.[22]

The operation of both intertextuality and intratextuality can be tenuous, sometimes relying only on one word. During the bushfire that engulfs the Glastonbury homestead in *The Tree of Man*, Stan Parker is urgently seeking Madeleine, who, by her name, her aloof nature, and much of the language used to describe events both in White's text and that of Poe, makes Glastonbury a type of House of Usher,

> " MADMAN! I TELL YOU THAT SHE NOW STANDS WITHOUT THE DOOR!" As if in the superhuman energy of his utterance there had been found the potency of a spell – the huge antique panels to which the speaker pointed, threw slowly back, upon the instant, their ponderous and ebony jaws. It was the work of the

> rushing gust – but then without those doors there DID stand the lofty and enshrouded figure of the lady Madeline of Usher. There was blood upon her white robes, and the evidence of some bitter struggles upon every portion of her emaciated frame ... For a moment she remained trembling and reeling to and fro ... then, with a low moaning cry, fell heavily inward upon the person of her brother ... From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast ... [T]he vast house and its shadows were alone behind me ... I saw the mighty walls rushing asunder ... (Poe 156-7)

Both the scene from *The House of Usher* and those from *The Tree of Man* are apocalyptic:

> Approaching some climax, the breath of the saviour or *sacrifice*, it was not clear which, came quicker; he *hurtled* in his heavy boots, flinging behind him the leaves of doors, kicking the furniture even ... Stan Parker, in a wind, broke his way to the heart of the house, it seemed, and saw that she was standing there, her back towards him, because the fire was of first importance. Madeleine was wearing some kind of loose gown that shone in the firelight with many other lights. Above this sheath and on to it her hair flowed ... "You must think I'm mad" ... "There are moments of madness," she said, "in anyone" ... Till he picked her up. It was not their flesh that touched but their final bones. Then they were writhing through the fire. They were not living. They had entered a phase of pain and contained consciousness ... "Look! He is there," they were crying ... "He has her" ... At this point the holocaust at Glastonbury could have consumed even the spectators ... A child ... doubted as the lighting split the bungling fire. And finally cried in terror as thunder crashed and the grey scene of ashes, in which they were all standing, shook. (178-81 [emphasis added])

The intertexts between Poe's short story and *The Tree of Man* resonate throughout both works. The mention of *hurtled* and *sacrifice* in *The Tree of Man*, and the fact that both Stan and Madeleine are burnt, but remain alive, also intratexts with the underlying themes of *The Vivisector*. Hurtle's name is a metaphor for being thrust through life without much choice; the notion of vivisection in which a living being is sacrificed to an experimenter, or a tormentor; and the notion of heading for some climax that will defy the materiality of doors and furniture and all tangible objects. Because the single word *hurtled* is used in an apocalyptic scene that intertexts with "The Fall of the House of Usher," Poe's story can also be drawn into an intertextual reading of *The Vivisector*.

The word *eddy* appears throughout White's *oeuvre*. Undoubtedly it is a word liked by the writer, but after having read *The Twyborn Affair*, Eddie Twyborn intratexts with White's uses of the word *eddy*, drawing earlier White novels and

Figure 24 – *The Alarm,* 1946, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 90.4 x 121.2 cm, ANG, page 30 of *SNNK*.

Figure 25 – *Giggle Palace,* 1945, ripolin enamel on canvas, 76.2 x 63.5 cm, AGSA, page 49 of *SNA*.

stories (and texts written by other writers) together in a kind of collagic way: "[s]o that Palfreyman and Miss Trevelyan were reduced to a somewhat dark eddy on the gay stream of trite encounters and light laughter that had soon enveloped them" (*Voss* 107); "[o]r, suddenly, they would lose control, whirled around by unsuspected eddies. But willingly. As they leaned back inside the slippery funnels of the music, they would have allowed themselves to be sucked down, the laughter and the conversation trembling on their transparent teeth" (*RC* 29); and both these passages intertext with the burning house in Lowry's *Under the Volcano*, "[a]nd leaving the burning dream Yvonne felt herself suddenly gathered upwards an borne towards the stars, through eddies of stars scattering aloft with ever wider circlings like rings on water" (337). When read intertextually with Lowry's lines, Nolan's *The Galaxy*, 1957-58 (fig. 7) becomes people being borne through eddies of the milky way.

Mirrors often feature in the work of White, whose autobiography is titled, *Flaws in the Glass*. The notion of there being flaws in a glass/mirror intertexts with Nolan's *Giggle Palace*, 1945 (fig. 25) in which a figure is depicted as if seen in a distortion mirror at a fun park. The notion of flawed mirrors also intertexts with Nolan's image of *Narcissus*, 1947 in which there is a waterfall instead of a quiet pool, and in which Narcissus regards the viewer (of the painting) rather than the water. If Nolan's Narcissus did regard the water he would see an impossibly moving image of himself in the waterfall. Nolan's paintings intertext with these lines about Palfreyman's sister, "[s]he feels that she is doomed to remain unique. I forgot to say she has had all the mirrors removed from the house, for her reflection is a double that she has grown to hate. Of course, there are all those other objects in glass, which I have mentioned, but they, she says, distort in any case" (*Voss* 263). When Voss decides to read Le Mesurier's book he fears the distorting power of words to mirror the reader's self/selves, "Voss took the book. Then, he hesitated, as if about to look in a mirror and discover the deformities he most feared" (294). There are also distorting mirrors in *The Vivisector*. Early in Duffield's career, when he arrives home to paint a self-portrait, "[t]here his *Doppelgänger* was leering at at him out of a distorting mirror. He took a brush and extenuated the rather too desirable mouth into a straight line [sic]"

(239). When Duffield is faced with his retrospective (and all its implications), he thinks, "O numinous occasion sighted in distorted mirrors of variable treachery" (582).[23] Both the intratextuality of (distorted) mirror-images, and distortion in general, in both men's works, greatly complicate intertextual readings of their works based on these themes.

In his book, Le Mesurier's writes:

> [w]hen they had opened us with knives, they took out our hearts. Some wore them in their hats, some pressed them to keep for ever, some were eating them as if they had been roses, all with joy, until it was realized the flesh had begun to putrefy. Then they were afraid. They hung their flowers upon a dark tree, quickly, quickly ... How the tears of parents flow ... The dead, red flowers go gaily on the water." (294)

This intratexts with several passages and themes from other White texts. There is a notion of vivisection in the ambiguity as to whether or not the children are living at the time of the operation described by Le Mesurier, which intratexts with Rhoda's comment: "I might be vivisected afresh" (*TV* 445). That the roses are worn in hats intratexts with *The Aunt's Story:* "'What is that?' he asked, touching the flattened gauze rose on her discarded hat ... 'A rose?' he said. 'A black rose?' ... The hat sat straight, but the doubtful rose trembled and glittered, leading a life of its own" (*TAS* 268, 287). In *Riders in the Chariot* the young Alf paints a tree on which are flesh-like roses,

> He drew a blue line round each of the crimson roses, so that they were for ever contained.
> She laughed. She said:
> "You cannot resist colour. There was never anything so red. You must learn in time, though, it is delicacy that counts" ...
> He touched it with vermilion, and it bled afresh.
> "What are these peculiar objects, or fruit – are they? – hanging on your tree?"
> He did not say ...
> "Those," he said, then, "are dreams."
> He was ashamed though.
> "Dreams! But there is nothing to indicate they are any such thing. Just a shape. I should have said mis-shapen kidneys!"
> ... And all the foetuses were palpitating on the porous paper. (317)

Lotte's suicide in the bath also intertexts with Le Mesurier's poem,

> Or if she cared to look, she was faced with a flush of roses, of increasing crimson ... If she smiled, or sank, she would drink the roses she was offering to those others pressed always more suffocatingly close around her. (*ES* 607-8)

Another line from Le Mesurier's poem also intratexts with *The Aunt's Story:* "[t]here is another side of the house on which the pine-trees stand" (*Voss* 295); "[t]he room where Father sat was the side the pines were" (*TAS* 22).

In *The Tree of Man* we are told of Mr Armstrong, the rich land-owner who lives near the Parkers, "he shaded his eyes with a fringe of leaves" (68). There are other titles that intratext with phrases used in other White texts. In *The Tree of Man,* "The brown sods of dead roses were rotting in the rain" (77). This line intratexts with White's short story "Dead Roses," in which "There they were, the bower roses, in some cases almost turned to metal, to bronze. The petals of the dead roses creaked as she passed ... the petals of entombed roses falling, as she passed in the probable direction of the kitchen" (*TBO* 43-44). The intratextuality continues, "[i]n this dead place that Father had described the roses were as brown as paper bags" (*AS* 23); and in Voss, the servant, Rose, dies, "Rose Portion had turned aside her face. The watery blood had stained the pillow, her leather tongue was already stiff" (233). If a Nolan image such as *Rosa mutabilis*, 1944 (fig. 186) intertexts with White's use of roses then, the entire *oeuvre* of intratextual White roses may be drawn into such an intertextual reading; and the same is true for Nolan's images.

Assimilating all the texts from any artist's *oeuvre* can be likened to making a map, as can assimilating all the texts from any particular literary genre, or any other textual category that we may choose to create. National identity, for instance, has its own intratexts, but it is up to individual readers, or particular readerly communities, to decide which texts are intratexts, and which texts are intertexts, and whether or not any purpose will be served by distinguishing between the two. For the purposes of clarity, I delimit my use of intratextuality to describing intra-*oeuvral* intertextuality and the intertextuality that takes place in one book or one artistic series. I do not discuss further the ways in which readers might extrapolate those boundaries. How intratextuality and intertextuality can operate to form our notions of national identity, however, has become a subject of study for cultural theorists. All intertextual readings will always be affected by individual readers' intratextuality with their own *oeuvres* of

virtual intertextual (and intratextual) readings, and their capacities to intertext those *oeuvres* with every variety of text.

Figure 186 (repeated) – *Rosa mutabilis*, 1945, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 91.5 x 122 cm, Heide, page 60 of *SNLL*.

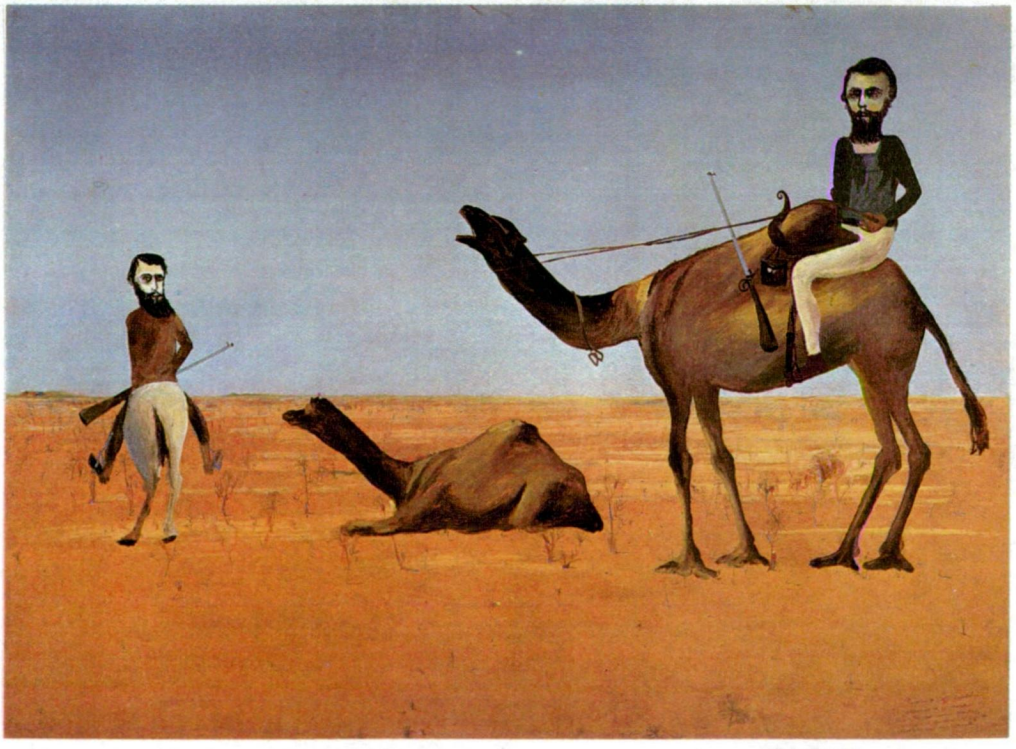


Figure 26 – *Burke and Wills*, 1948, ripolin on board, 91.3 x 122.2 cm, Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, page 29 of *NL*.

All night through the upland
spaces of our skull
in low gear shifting skyward
they climb towards dawn.

A lit butt glows, a beercan
clatters. Strung out
on the hills, new streets that shine
in the eyes of farmboys, cities

alive only at nightfall
that span a continent.
Nameless. Not to be found
by day on any map.
David Malouf,
"Off the map"

"The resultant paintings ...
are not simple illustrations of past events
but *imaginings* of historical reality."
Jane Clark

myth-making:
the amalgamation of historiography,
geography, and art

Because art and myths have been traditionally of great worth in artistic/literary economies, both the subject matter of Australian myths and their artistic treatment have been sites of great debate.[24] Australian myths have struggled to emerge without being attacked for either their lack of grandeur, the lack of skill of their author-artist-creator(s), and/or their inability to adequately represent what it is to be multi-cultural postcolonial Australia. Jane Clark writes,

> [in 1958 Cyril Pearl] in *Nation* attacked Nolan, Stewart, John Manifold, David Boyd and others for "the deification of Kelly, Burke, Leichhardt and the rest;" which, he said, "seems to derive from the fact that Australians, hungry for a mythology in a country barren of legend, are prepared to confect one from any old ingredients." (*SNLL* 116)

Would Pearl have preferred mythographic representation of the genocide of the Tasmanian, or mainland Australian, Aboriginal people, one wonders. Evidently not, as he does not mention Nolan's painting of white brutality towards the Tasmanian Aboriginal people – *Aboriginal Hunt*, 1947 (fig. 14) – a work that was the "first and only work of an intended group of paintings focussing on the extermination (*N* 7). For such a work to be valorised today, however, it would have to survive the debate of Australian critics who often wield critical apparatus adopted unmodified from

international sites of authority, rather than methodologies appropriated and revised in order to be self-aware, and strategic.

Thirty years after Cyril Pearl, Humphrey McQueen writes:

> were our myths – those castles of the mind – to be located in the past, in the outback, in the Bible and classical legends, or in the contemporary city? No single answer was possible. (McQueen 9)

What are myths other than an amalgamation of texts: historiography, geography, art, and other (inter)texts? The formation of myths often involves the mistranslation of material texts that have been intertexted with readerly virtual intertexts, stored for periods of time, and then interspersed with other texts as new material intertextual productions. Before these texts are reproduced during acts of communication, however, they are not always referred back to their material textual sources to check for textual "accuracy" before the process of textual transference continues. In many ways, artists contribute to the process of myth formation by creating material texts that are hybrid history-fictions. Many history-fictions intertext with so-called historical fact to assume the status of remembered historical reality. Material culture in the forms of physical texts and physical works of art (and everything that has contributed to those material productions), culture that circulates in its untraceable forms in our societies, and innumerable virtual texts (all of which are contingent on various human subjects), intermix in varying ways, and to varying degrees, to form the intertextual collages we call myths and histories.

The explorers to be investigated in this section are predominantly the stuff of art. Voss was never an explorer – except in White's country of the mind and the inner-territories of innumerable readers. Burke and Wills were both explorers of whom it may be "truthfully" written by historiographers, but *Burke* and *Wills* are also the stuff of mythography, both visual and narrative (figs. 26 & 27). In figure 26 we see the figures of Burke and Wills as cartoon-like and buffoonish, but also as poignant characters that intertext with historiographic representations of the "actual" explorers.[25] The explorer in figure 27 is far more ethereal, beginning to melt into the landscape. This painting also intertexts with the "splendour of enamels" described in *Voss* (258), and with *Inter-imagic reading I*, 1996 (fig. 5).[26] The enamels read

intertextually as both the enamel rocky surfaces depicted by Nolan, and as the type of paint being used. It is Nolan's *Burke* and *Wills* that trespass the pages of *Voss* far more than the explorers described in the pages of historiographic writing. All the explorers, whose bodies actually decayed into the earth of *Terra Australis*, can be both completely present and totally absent from the images that Nolan and White created in response to their expeditions.

White wrote to Ben Huebsch in 1956:

> [s]ome years ago I got the idea for a book about a megalomaniac explorer. As Australia is the only country I really know in my bones, it had to be set in Australia, and as there is practically nothing left to explore, I had to go back to the middle of last century. When I returned here after the War and began to look up old records, my idea seemed to fit the character of Leichhardt. But as I did not want to limit myself to a historical reconstruction (too difficult and too boring), I only *based* my explorer on Leichhardt. The latter was, besides, merely unusually unpleasant, whereas Voss is mad as well. (*PW* 313)

Until recently, most historians have relied totally on the "truth" or "near-truths" that may be approached via the language of historiography, and the relationship of that language to supposed actual past events. Both White and Nolan, however, loosely plot a course across the texts of historiography and its (inter)texts, and it is for readers to decide how much of that historiography will be allowed to resonate in any particular ™transient moment™ of their intertextual reading/viewing experiences. Nolan constructed his responses to Burke and Wills from a mix of historiography, Nolan iconography, and revisions of past artistic representations of various historical incidents. He also journeyed into the outback, but:

> [n]one of these trips took Nolan over Burke and Wills's route. He did not even visit Cooper's Creek. But Nolan's concern with stories in the landscape did not involve painting the exact locality: he had set many of his Kelly subjects in Wimmera landscapes rather than in northeastern Victoria. In any event, he based several of his Burke and Wills paintings on nineteenth-century engravings. What was important to him was that their story, like that of Kelly, was one familiar to most Australians. (*BW* 299)

White drew Nolan's artistic responses to Australian explorers into the intertextual material production of *Voss*:

> [a]bout the time White was first researching Leichhardt, Nolan was reading the diaries of the doomed explorers Burke and Wills. His paintings of their ludicrous journey to the Gulf were

> those that particularly stirred White: men and camels tramping across the grey-green country of the Gulf, incongruous historical figures in a hostile landscape. Years after ... he told the painter how he felt they had both been exploring the same territory, and expressed what they found in the same way. (*PW* 316)

It is peculiar to be confronted, often, by how little we know about our myths, geography, history and art. White wrote a novel, set largely in the desert of the Australian Outback, a book that has come to be lauded as a narrative that is central to Australian identity. It is ironic, then, and entirely appropriate in the land of Ern Malley, to realise that:

> White had never seen, never saw, the dead heart of Australia. All he had to draw on were his memories of Africa, and books and paintings. Once the expedition left Jildra, Voss was on an expedition to the outer limits of his imagination. White had a guide. On the seventh floor of the David Jones ... Store, he had seen the great exhibitions of Sidney Nolan's outback paintings in March 1949 and March 1950 ... "When you enter the gallery," wrote the critic of the Sydney *Daily Telegraph,* "the blaze of reddish-brown hits you like a ton or two of real red earth." White came to the Australian desert through Nolan's eyes.(*PW* 316)

Art mediated through other art, texts of material production mediated via other texts of material production, any text mediated through any and every other form of text, is commonly understood reading practice today. A reading myth circulates, however, that all art can be traced back inevitably to a reality that is assumed to be a pure, or un-produced entity. Postmodernism reading practices, however, allow for an endless interplay between virtual readerly texts, texts of material production, and a reality that can only ever be accessed when readers intertext virtual perceptions of "reality" with virtual (inter)texts. The fact that White's depiction of reality in *Voss* was created by interacting with Nolan's paintings, rather than the reality of lived Australian landscape, is liberating, intertextually, because *Voss* is interacting not only with Australian reality (both historical and actual) but also with Australian art.

Voss will also intertext with various other realities, and with artistic productions from other geographical and historical spaces, as a wide range of readers intertext with the novel. Readings become unpredictable as we come to expect a diversity of readings to co-exist, rather than a series of opposing closures. Both White and Nolan desired to break away from traditional responses to Australia, or to play

against those responses. In 1958, many Australian critics were offended when White referred to "The Great Australian Emptiness" in "The Prodigal Son." This comment, however, intertexts ironically with colonist notions of Australia as *Terra Nullius*. It is also a play on the search being made by some Australians for the Great Australian Novel (and for other Great Australian Cultural Institutions), the implied lack thereof creating a perpetual vacuum (*PWS* 15). There are various other readings of White's comments, but reading intertextually enables ironic readings that may not otherwise be apparent.

Diagram 3 is one way of representing the complex interplay between various texts that may intertext with *Voss*. Various texts of Australian identity are also

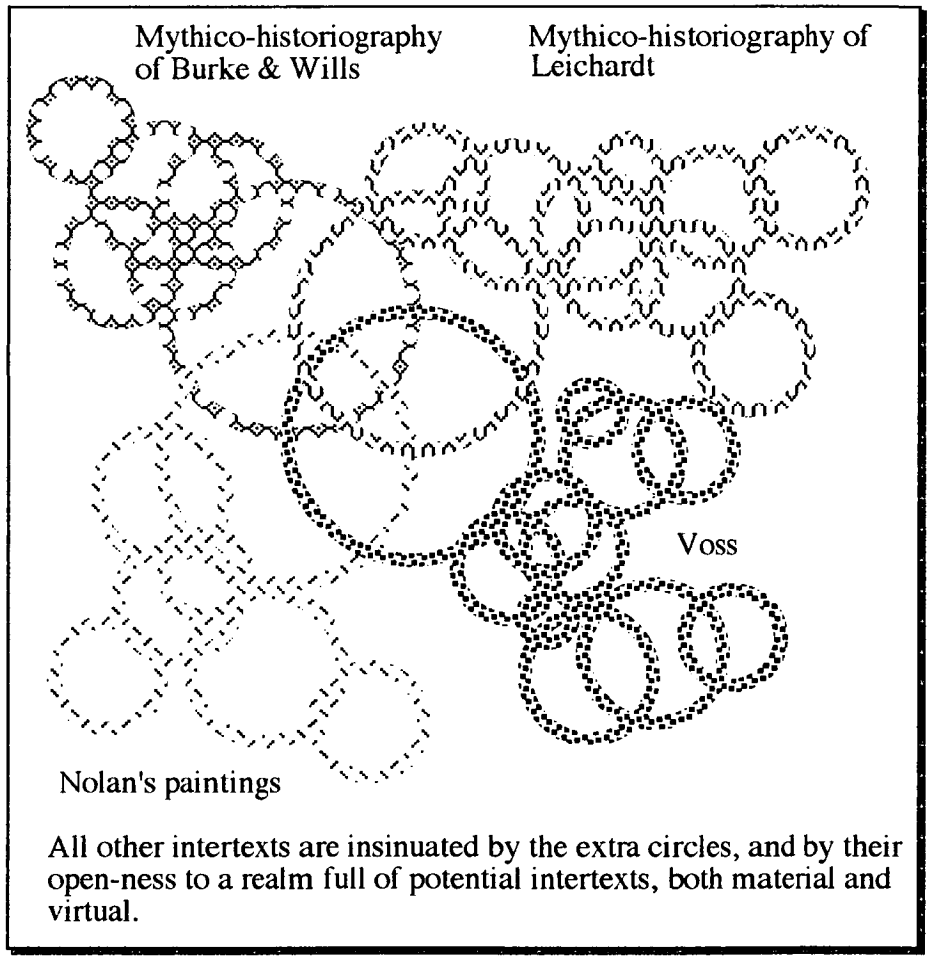


diagram 3

potential intertexts with this set. The boundaries of each set in diagram 3 will be porous, and as each reader's virtual texts and intertexts intersect with such a complex textual medley, the possible transient moments are almost limitless. The entire set is further complicated by any reader's knowledge of the many and varied historical and

artistic texts that intertext both individually, and as groups, with any particular set. For instance, White says,

> [t]he real Voss, as opposed to the actual Leichhardt, was a creature of the Egyptian desert, conceived by the perverse side of my nature at a time when all our lives were dominated by that greater German megalomaniac. (*FG* 104)

Knowing, or at least suspecting, that this authorial intertext is interlaced throughout *Voss* can affect readings of the novel. A reader who has either read about, or experienced, something of the life of Adolf Hitler, may have personal intertextual transient moments that resound loudly with that particular intertext, where other readers might experience transient moments that are entirely different.

White also plays with the known character of Burke, "obsessed, arrogant and self-satisfied" (*BW* 300). He contrasts Burke's traits with those of characters such as Le Mesurier or Palfreyman, who exhibit personalities more like those of Wills, an "introspective and defeated" man, in direct contrast to what be expected of someone bearing his name (*BW* 300). The word *will* intertexts both with the explorer's surname and also with Shakespeare's punning on his first name at various points in his works, especially in *The Sonnets*,

> *Wilt* thou, whose *will* is large and spacious
> Not once vouchsafe to hide my *will* in thine?
> Shall *will* in others seem right gracious,
> And in my *will* not fair acceptance shine?
> ...
> So though being rich in *Will* add to they *will*
> One *will* of mine, to make thy large *Will* more
> ...
> Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*
> (135: 5-8, 11-12, 14. [emphasis added])
>
> *Will will* fulfil the treasure of thy love,
> Ay, fill it full with *will*s, and my *will* one
> ...
> And then thou lov'st me for my name is *Will.*
> (136: 5-6, 14 [emphasis added])
>
> "Future," said Voss, "is *will.* "
> "Oh, I have the *will,*" said Laura quickly ...
> "This expedition, Mr Voss ... is pure *will*"...
> "You are not going to allow your *will* to destroy you," she said
> ...
> "I do not believe that I fully understand you. But I *will.*"
> (68-69 [emphasis added])

The fact that the sonnets in which Shakespeare plays with the word *will* are proclamations of love, also intertexts with White's use of *will* in this context. The

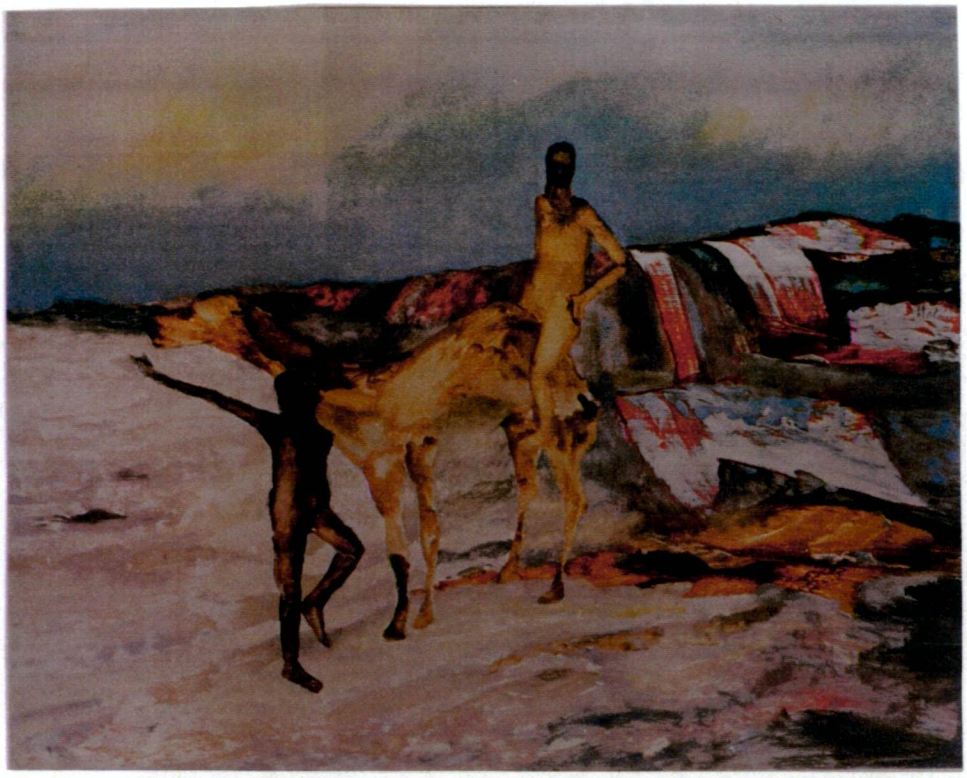


Figure 27 – *Burke and Wills Expedition,* 1962, synthetic polymer paint on hardboard, 121.9 x 152.5 cm, page 135 of *SNLL*.

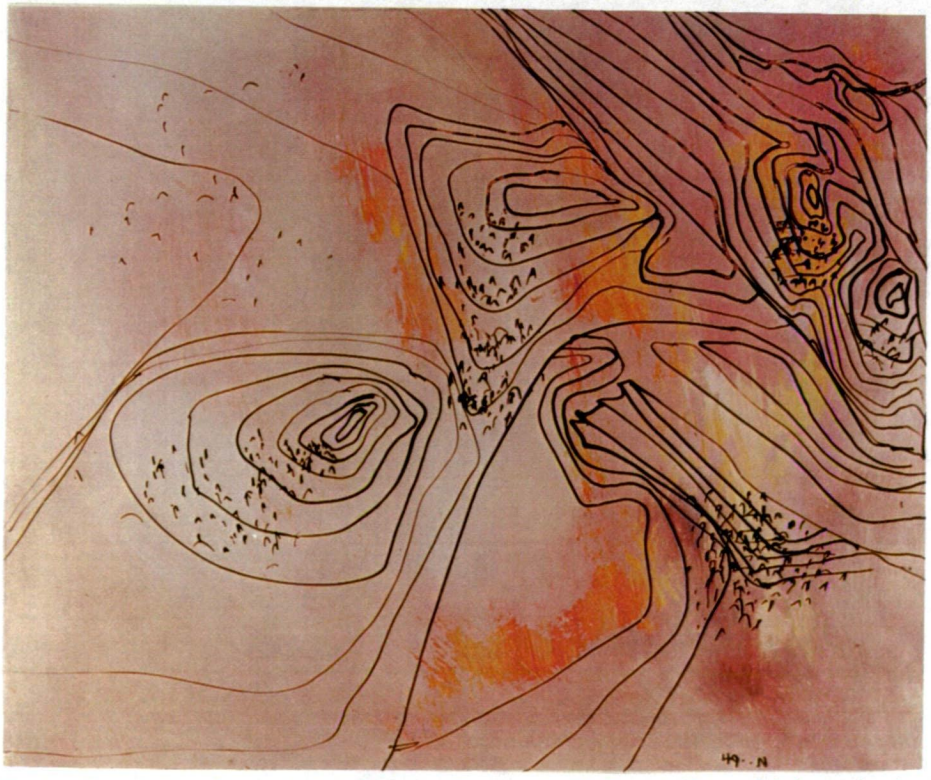


Figure 28 – *Aerial Landscape – Circular Contours*, 1949, ripolin and ink on back of glass, 25.4 x 30.5 cm, page 101 of *SNA*.

passage in which the play takes place is an episode in which Voss and Laura flirt in a covert manner. The word *will* reads intertextually, then, as a play on Voss's will to conquer land, a play upon the name of Wills the explorer, and also the desire of the speaker in Will[iam Shakespeare]'s poetry to inflame love. These intertextual readings will always vary as intertexts traverse one another, and play, in virtual readerly spaces.

Nolan comments of the way he began to paint, "I think ... it was due to doing maps at school ... I liked the idea of putting a line around the image" (Oral History Tape 58 732). *Aerial Landscape – Circular Contours*, 1949 (fig. 28), and *(Miner)*, 1949 (fig. 29) are examples of Nolan's use of these lines. *Mine*, 1949, from the *Eureka Stockade* series, continues this linear tracing of the land's form under the earth as the mines are mapped, and rather than the land formation being geologically correct with mostly horizontal lines, the lines are more like the patterning of wood grain on a timber table. The linear depiction of the landscape, then, may be read as mimetic, cartographic, and, as always with the art of Nolan, the lines might signify any number of other possible signifieds including: the lines of western musical scores, writing, the waves of the ocean, the rings of wood grain, the waves of scientific graphs, the waxing and waning of human emotions, the lines of weatherboards as mirrored in old glass windows, wooden dinghies reflected in water, and/or tram-lines in Melbourne.

Of Nolan's 1949 glass paintings of aerial views of outback Queensland, Lynn says, "the ridges often resembled contour lines on maps" (*SNA* 100). Maps are important to both White and Nolan as they play with ideas of making maps of both external and internal realities, of both historical and imagined places. The physical surroundings in *Voss* become almost irrelevant: "[t]henceforth they followed at their several speeds the river-bed which Boyle had identified for Voss as the C—" (189). By using the convention of a capital letter and a dash, the text deliberately evades connection with historical or geographical realism from this point on. When the narrative of *Voss* plays with the notion of map-making and pictorial representation of landscape it is in a most surreal way, "[o]nce in the course of this hard going, the horse which Voss was riding shied at a snake. The fact that it was a live one was

surprising, for all else in the landscape appeared to be dead" (207). This snake can be read as the black line of a river on a map, suddenly come to life. There are constant slippages between the pages of *Voss* to other textual planes: painted board or canvas, imagined historical actuality, historiographic text, textual conventions of printing black ink onto white paper, and the making of maps:

> [t]hen the two old people stood rather humbly watching an historic event. In that blaze, they were dwindling to mere black points, and as the light poured, and increased, and invaded the room, even Laura Trevelyan, beneath the dry shells of her eye-lids, was bathed at least temporarily in the cool flood of stars. (376)

The Bonners are reduced to the dots of writing, or possibly the dots on a map.

Cartographic-like lines are used by Nolan on the cover of the E&S dust-jacket of *Voss* (fig. 3). The illustration consists of the figure of Voss, several loosely depicted dwellings, and some distant trees and hills are suggested by thin black undulating lines. Because there are only five lines on Nolan's E&S cover-illustration for *Voss*, the notion of a musical score also intertexts with the landscape, which further intertexts with the score of Meale's opera *Voss*. Abstracted trees make occasional deformed musical notes. The dust-jacket of the first edition E&S *Voss* (fig. 3), also intertexts with the map that Voss boasts he will make (23). Nolan's cartographic-like lines are as unfinished as Bonner's map: "[h]ere, indeed, was a map of a kind, presumptuous where it was not blank" (23). The blur that exists between fact and fiction is mercilessly mocked by the narrator as Bonner reads from the map:

> [h]is honest flesh heaved, and himself rather drunken, began to read off his document, to chant almost, to invoke the first recorded names, the fly-spots of human settlement, the legend of rivers.
>
> Mr Bonner read the words, but Voss saw the rivers. He followed them in their fretful course. He flowed in cold glass, or dried up in little yellow pot-holes, festering with green scum. (23)

Voss becomes the landscape – whether an actual or an artistic depiction of a landscape is always unclear. He might be a painting that is at once glacial, pocked with yellow, and tinged with a sickly green. As readerly transient intertextual moments occur, the figure of Voss can be translated into a pictorial image after any likeness of Burke or Wills, or any other of Nolan's historical figures. Voss not only exists on the plane of writing, then, but is easily inter-imaged with artist's material surface because of

Figure 29 – *(Miner)*, 1949, oil on glass, 24.3 x 29.2 cm, plate 14 of *N*.

Figure 30 – *Carcase*, 1953, ripolin on masonite, 36 x 48 in., plate 47 of *SN*.

the visual epigraph, that is set up by our knowledge of White's intertextual complicity in choosing and using Nolan as the illustrator for the cover of the first edition E&S *Voss*. Readers can draw upon Nolan images knowing that there is a certain validity to their creation of intertextuality that might not have existed without the Nolan cover.

When Nolan depicts the landscape there is also always the potential for seeing the bones of human and/or animal skeletons. The intertextuality that operates between skeletons and the ridges of the land enables a dialogue between the inanimate earth and those living beings that will ultimately descend into that earth. The play also (paradoxically) suggests that the land itself might be alive. This idea is particularly evident in images such as *Carcase*, 1953 (fig. 30). Of his drought paintings of 1952-53, Nolan says, "[t]he ligaments and bones related to the central Australian mountains" (*SNA* 116). Lynn has set this comment beside *Carcass, 1952*, the bones of which can be read as mountains in the desert (*SNA* 117). After reading Nolan's comment, and again viewing the ram's carcase, the outlines of the mountains, and what might even be contour lines on a map, intertext with the depiction of the dead beast.

In *The Tree of Man*, White uses the device of making landscape into body (and vice versa) when Amy leaves the valley in which she has grown up. As she is leaving the actual valley, her memory of living in the valley, is merged with her memory of the "valley" of an actual sick and dying cow. Cow and land become one; Amy is merged with the present landscape as the road tugs at her heart; and finally she is "torn" from the scene.

> The cart rocked. The road pulled at her heart. And Amy Parker, now in the full anguish of departure was torn slowly from the scene in which her feeling life had been lived. She saw the bones of the dead cow, of which she could even remember the maggots, of Venables' Biddy with the short tits, that had died of the milk fever. Ah, she did feel now. It came swimming at her, that valley, from which the nap had been rubbed in parts, by winter, and by rabbits. Its patchiness had never coruscated more, not beneath the dews of childhood even. But what had been, and what was still a shining scene with painted houses under the blowing trees, with the carts full of polished cans in which the farmers put milk ... all would fade forever at the bend in the road. (25-26)

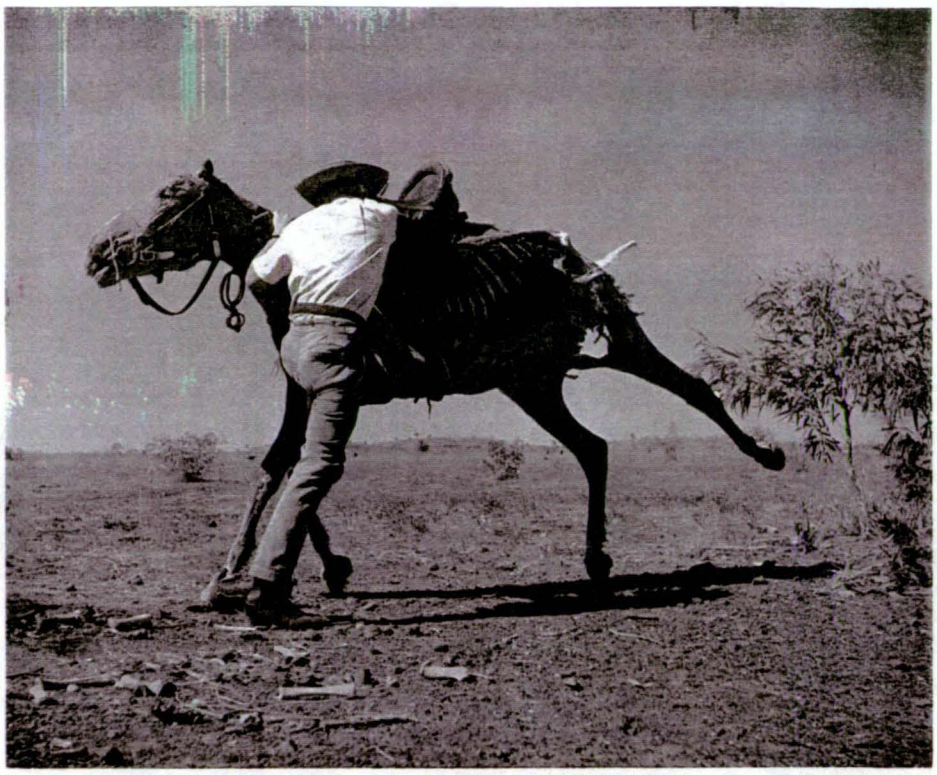


Figure 31 – *Desert*, 1952, photograph, plate 70 of *SN*.

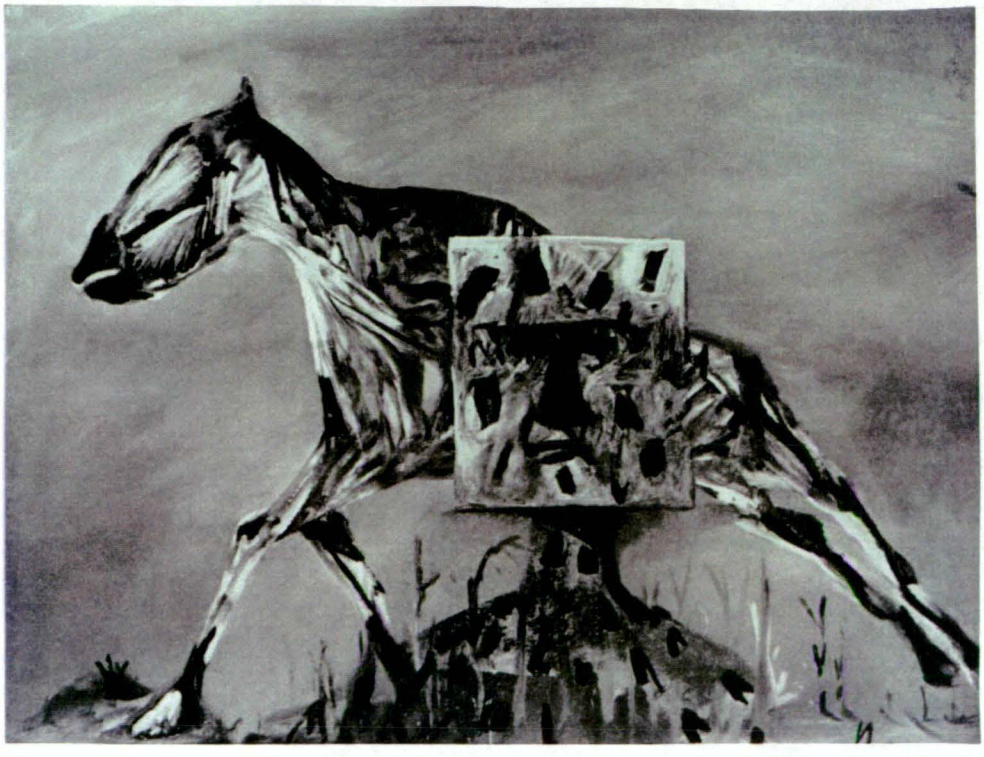


Figure 32 – *Kelly and Drought*, 1957, ripolin on masonite, 36 x 48 in., plate 71 of *SN*.

The conflation of actual valley, and dead (and sick) cow, parallels the visual game Nolan plays with the landscape, depicting it as seen from the aerial point of view of the gods, as cartography, as animals' bodies (which always intertext with human bodies), and as a place to which all living things will eventually return (figs. 28, 30, 47). Some pages prior to White's use of animal body as metaphor for land in *The Tree of Man*, the narrative offers a prelude to the idea when the young Stan Parker arrives in heretofore untouched bushland. In a sentence that is isolated from the others that surround it: "[d]own through him wound the long ribbon of warm tea" (16). This sentence in itself is not enough to sustain an alimentary-canal/road metaphor, but when it is placed alongside the paragraph about "that valley, from which the nap had been rubbed in parts," the resonance is sufficiently present to cause an uncertainty to resonate about what it is that makes up human bodies, and how the human body relates to landscape.[27]

There are many bones in *Voss*. From the outset, Voss is described from within and without, both literally and metaphorically. As he walks back to Sydney from the Bonner's homestead, "[h]is face had dwindled to the bone" (26). Voss is at once live, decaying and decayed man; living and dead country. The tragedy of Voss's expedition might be seen in Nolan's photograph of a man attempting to mount the carcase of a horse in *Desert*, 1952 (fig. 31).[28] This image intratexts with his representation of Kelly with a decaying horse, *Kelly and Drought*, 1957 (fig 32), and intertexts with the text of *Voss*, "[b]ehind the spare horses and the pack-mules would stumble the few skeletons of cattle" (242). Shimmering descriptions of decay intertext with the incongruous beauty of Nolan's drought paintings, and his depictions of explorers dying. Palfreyman points to "a species of diaphanous fly ... fascinated by the insect, glittering in its life with all the colours of decomposition" (47). At the end of the novel, Willie Pringle says, "The blowfly on its bed of offal is but a variation of the rainbow. Common forms are continually breaking into brilliant shapes. If we will explore them" (447). The text of *Voss* is ever peeling away layers of flesh, and layers of landscape, to reveal the skeletons of both human beings and the landscape. This textual play also intertexts with Nolan's skeletal depiction of convicts in his series, *For*

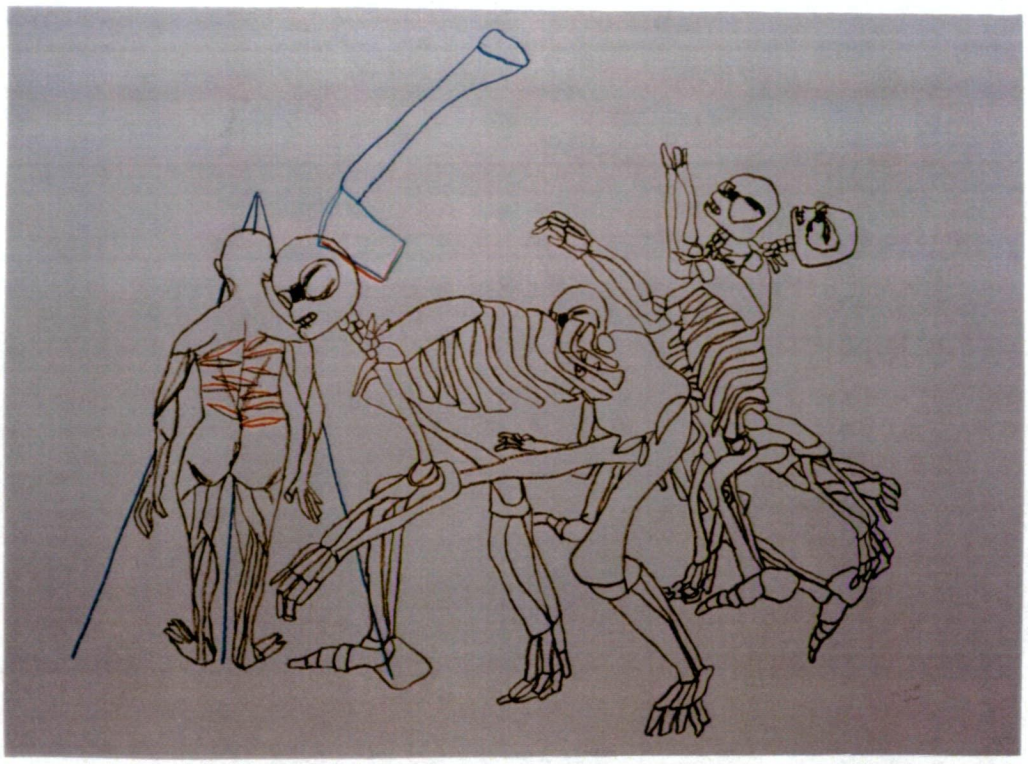


Figure 33 – *For the Term of His Natural Life*, 1985, wax crayon on paper, 101.5 x 137.1 cm, page 61 of *SND*.

Figure 34 – El Greco, *Burial of the Count Orgaz*, 1586, 191.9 x 141.75 in., Church of Santo Tomé, Toledo, page 51 of El Greco, *El Greco*, text by Leo Bronstein, London: Idehurst, 1951.

the Term of His Natural Life. In *For the Term of His Natural Life*, 1985 (fig. 33), a flogging triangle and stripes of bleeding flesh are juxtaposed with various moving convict skeletons.

Nolan comments on his approach to the glass miniatures made in response to the Eureka Stockade:

> I read Carboni Raffaelo's book on the rebellion and I took what he said as gospel. I did not try to do a large, historical summing up, but I did it as I read it in the book. They are, so to speak, one-off snapshots of each episode and of the *dramatis personae.* (*SNA* 92)

It is difficult not to see the same approach being taken to Nolan's depiction of the fictional explorer on the *Voss* cover. The bottom half of the cover reads as a historical snapshot of Johann Ulrich Voss, done in black pen on a stark white background (fig. 4).[29] White's vision for the cover was a Nolan version of El Greco's *Burial of the Conde de Orgaz* (fig. 34) (*Letters* 113). Nolan, however, chose to represent the quasi-historical scene with laconic mock-historical wit. The top half of the cover, however, signals quite a different message. The blue is a semi-opaque, unevenly applied wash, across which is written, as if by an aeroplane with golden yellow smoke: "PATRICK WHITE [diagonally across the back cover;] VOSS [across the front cover; and down the spine,]

VOSS

PATRICK [the letters of which are typeset down the spine]

WHITE" (fig. 3).

Rimbaud writes in "Sun and Flesh,"

> Man is King
> Man is God! ...
> The great sky is open! the mysteries are dead
> Before erect Man crossing his strong arms
> In the vast splendour of rich nature! (27, 28, 31)

Le Mesurier writes in his poem, "Man is King. They hung a robe upon him, of blue sky" (296). Blue sky is a characteristic of Nolan iconography, his ripolin blue skies being famous for their "Australian-ness." Nolan so completely took on the task of creating the *Voss* cover that for the first and only time in his creation of covers for White, he incorporated the name of the author and the title of the novel into his artistic

Figure 35 – Cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on inside front cover of *Voss*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960.

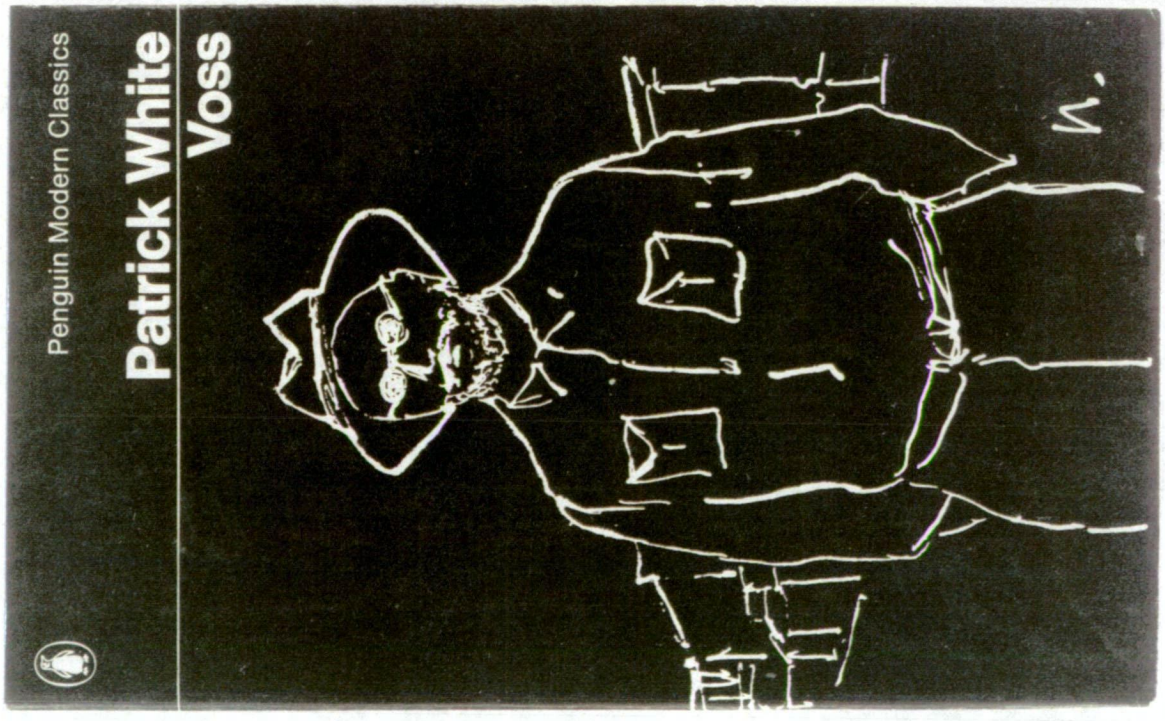


Figure 36 – Cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on inside front cover of *Voss*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979.

work. The only aspects of the work to survive onto the Penguin Modern Classic versions of the drawing, however, are the figure of Voss, the "n" of Nolan's signature, and several huts from the loosely depicted ramshackle outpost. The first Penguin cover has black lines on a white background (fig. 35), but the subsequent uses of the drawing are printed in the negative, producing a black background with white lines (figs. 36 & 205).

The figure of Voss with his hat and a shirt that has a pocket on each breast, intertexts with the figure in the landscape of *Gallipoli landscape with soldier*, c. 1958 (fig. 37). The man in *Gallipoli landscape with soldier* also has similar trousers to the figure on the *Voss* cover. The soldier is wearing a soldier's cap, but because it merges in with the murky background, it can easily be mistaken for a twin-peaked hat similar to those worn by Voss, and also by Burke and Wills. It is as though Voss has emerged from his own nightmare into the apocalypse of Gallipoli. The metaphor does not end there, however. Because Nolan's *Gallipoli* series intertexts with the cover chosen for the first edition E&S *Riders in the Chariot*, it seems that Voss has been transported in a chariot of fire to the awful territory of either the first World War of Gallipoli, or, because of the story-line of *Riders in the Chariot*, somewhere in the holocaust of Hitler's Europe. Both the Hitler intertext with *Voss*, and the fact that much of the desert telepathy between Laura and Voss intertexts with White's recollections of his time in Egyptian desert during the Second World War, further facilitate this intertextual reading.[30]

In Nolan's images of Burke and Wills, there is a sense of movement from the exterior reporting of fact to the depiction of internal loss and confusion. In *Burke and Wills leaving Melbourne,* 1950 (fig. 38) the two men are clothed, the camels look upright and resolute, and the city is stately, although the men are depicted as already being in the distance. The foreground, which comprises almost half the painting, is brown grassless paddock. The mode of the painting is mock-historical. From the beginning, however, there is a sense that the men will merge with the landscape, both literally and figuratively. Robertson describes the relationship between the landscape and the explorer's hat in *Burke, 1950* (fig. 39): "the slouch hat of the explorer on his

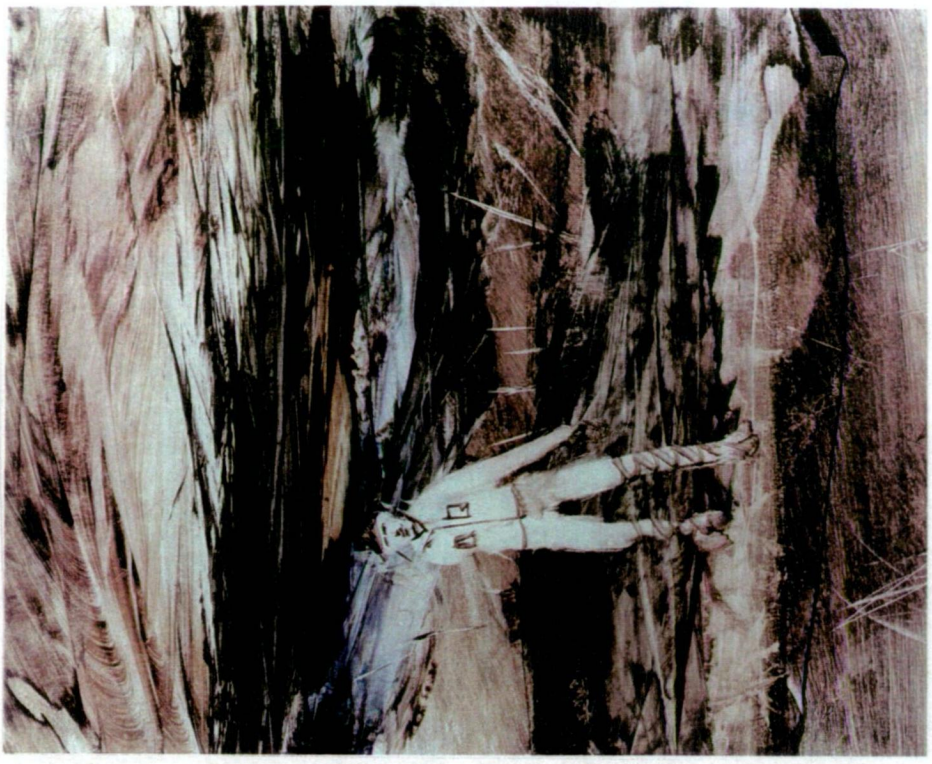


Figure 37 – *Gallipoli landscape with soldier*, c. 1958, acrylic on card, 30.4 x 25.4 cm, AWM, page 47 of *NG*.

Figure 38 – *Burke and Wills leaving Melbourne*, 1950, ripolin on masonite, 122 x 151 cm, plate 19 of *BW*.

camel [is] set against the distant landscape [of harsh, angular mountains] behind Melbourne, like another mountain peak."[31] Like Nolan's depictions of Burke and Wills, Nolan's Voss, and that created by White, are not only animate beings, but are always moving beyond that boundary into the realm of landscape. Voss's hat, with its twin peaks (fig. 4), intertexts with the hats worn by both Burke and Wills in various of Nolan's depictions. Twin peaks also loom in the clouds of Nolan's 1955 version of *Kelly* [as centaur] (fig. 40), in which the clouds look like a giant dual-peaked hat. The portrait of Ern Malley (fig. 41) also has a twin-peaked cap, round spectacles, and his ribs are showing through a shirt which has a breast pocket on the side that has not been scraped away to reveal flesh and bone. This image intertexts with Nolan's depiction of Voss. The fictional dead explorer has a parallel in the fictional dead poet, Ern Malley. Neither man ever existed, and yet they have both become icons in Australian cultural mythography. Nolan's likening of the explorers' clothes to the landscape itself is very much what White attempts to do in *Voss*. After Voss states, "I am of every assurance that I can lead an expedition across this continent," the narrator announces: "[n]ow he was a crag of a man. He beetled above the merchant, who wondered more than ever with what he had become involved" (21). Voss, from the outset is likened to the land across which he will traverse. Land also intertexts with hat in *A Fringe of Leaves*, where the dying Austin Roxburgh says, "Ellen, you are different. The light ... or the brim of that ... huge ... country ... *hat*. Raise it, please ... so that I can see ..." (214).

Perished, 1949 (fig. 42) shows the corpse of Burke lying on top of the landscape with which it merges in colour and form. The legend lies unburied. Neither the hero, who requested to lay unburied, nor the artist representing the dead man, is obeying the laws of "decent Christian burial."[32] In Nolan's art, Burke's dead body is being perpetually exposed to view because of his request. This image of a dead body on display in art intertexts with Christ's dead body which also perpetually reappears as work of art. Burke's dead body valorises the myth of valiant explorer pitting himself against the land, failing, but becoming a hero anyway. Voss is beheaded by an aboriginal devotee who cannot bear the power he senses flowing from his

Figure 39 – *Burke*, 1950, ripolin on hardboard, 120.2 x 91.5 cm, page 108 of *SNA*.

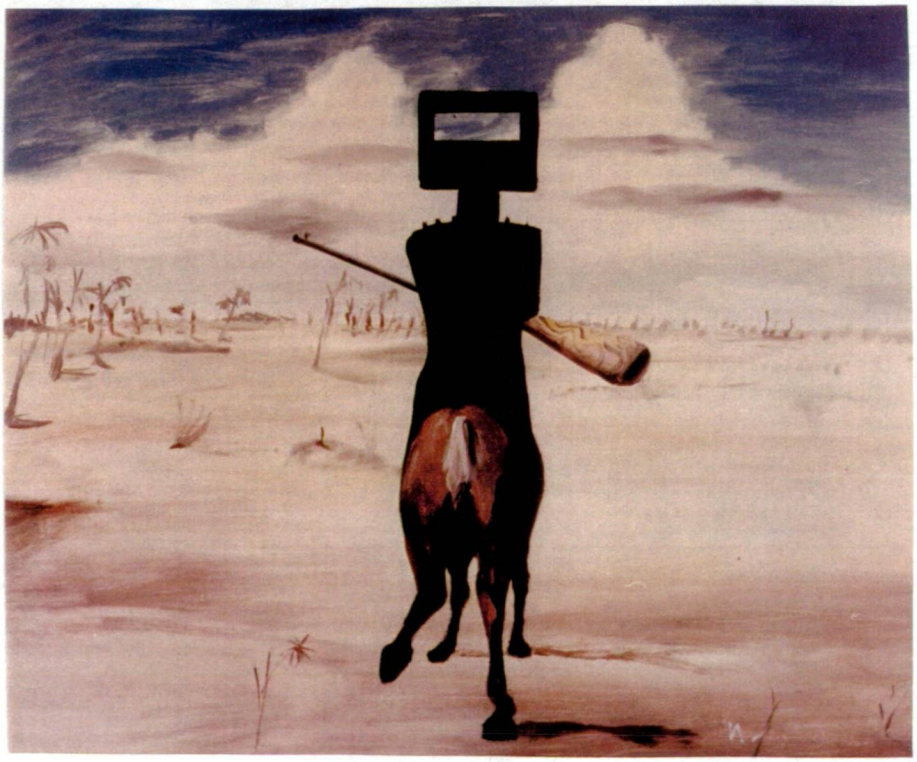


Figure 40 – *Kelly* [as centaur], 1955, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 81.5 x 100 cm, page 118 of *SNLL*.

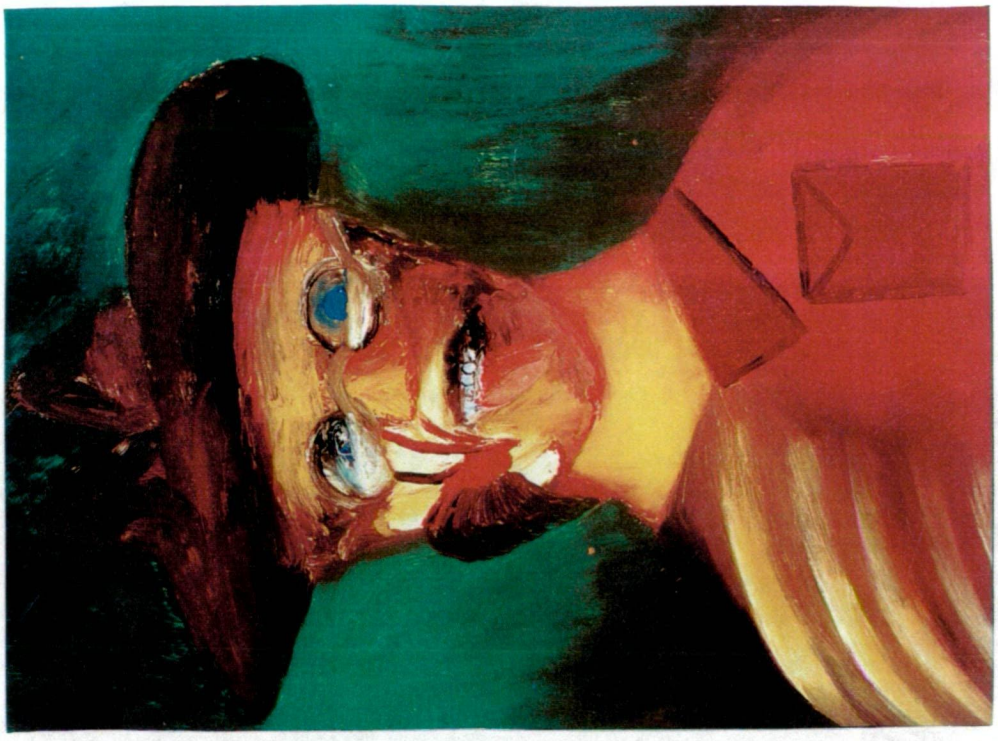


Figure 41 – *Ern Malley*, 1972, oil on hardboard, 122 x 122 cm, AGSA, page 164 of *SNLL*.

Figure 42 – *Perished*, 1949, ripolin enamel and red ochre oil paint on hardboard, 91 x 122 cm, UWA, page 107 of *SNLL*.

oppressor/mentor. The dead headless body is a textual apparition, that lives on, dead, in a work of art. In Nolan iconography, Ned Kelly is also often depicted as headless, but for his empty helmet. Kelly's plaster-cast death mask is a strange disembodied head that floats in abstracted flora and sky in *Death of a Poet,* 1953 (fig. 111). This head strangely counterbalances the empty helmets of other Kelly images, and even the beheaded body of Voss (394).

Of *Burke and Wills at Gulf,* 1961 (fig. 43), in which the two explorers are shown naked on their camels moving across the water of the mangrove swamps, Lynn says:

> [w]ater is little different from the land; everything slides and floats and explorers, instead of being defiant in attitude and form, are naked and vulnerable, their flesh taking on the hues of the earth itself. The work becomes insubstantial, like a day-dream. (*SNA* 124-25)

Burke, 1964 (also known as *Camel and Figure,* 1962 [fig. 136]) is a scene of which Lynn comments:

> Burke is slightly ridiculous, while the camel is the essence of realism; it knows what it wants while Burke's world is a shifting dream, the rocks and sand coalescing into a terrain that is unfixed and melting. (*SNA* 134-35)

These comments, and the paintings, intertext and inter-image with the following passage that is taken from a dream-sequence just before Voss's death:

> [a]s for himself, a cold wind of dreaming began about this time to blow upon his face, and it seemed as if he might even escape from that pocket of purgatory in which he had been caught ... Once he had ridden away, he did not look back at the past, so great was his confidence in the future.
>
> Thus hopeful, it was obvious she must be at his side, and, in fact, he heard a second horse blowing out its nostril, the sound so pitched he would have known it to be morning without the other infallible sign of a prevailing pearliness. As they rode, the valleys became startling in their sonorous reds, their crenellations broken by tenuous Rhenish turrets of great subtlety and beauty. Once upon the banks of a transparent river, the waters of which were not needed to quench thirst, so persuasive was the air which flowed into and over their bodies, they dismounted to pick the lilies that were growing there ... After lingering some time with their discoveries, the two figures, unaffected by the interminable nature of the journey, and by their own smallness in the immense landscape, remounted ... and rode on. (392-93)

This passage is an intertextuality of Nolan's interior paintings such as *Central Australia,* 1950 (fig. 44) (which can be read as a reverse-ekphrasis of "Rhenish turrets"), and Nolan's depictions of Burke and Wills nearing the gulf when the

Figure 43 – *Burke and Wills at Gulf*, 1961, synthetic polymer on hardboard, 122 x 152 cm, NGV, page 134 of *SNLL*.

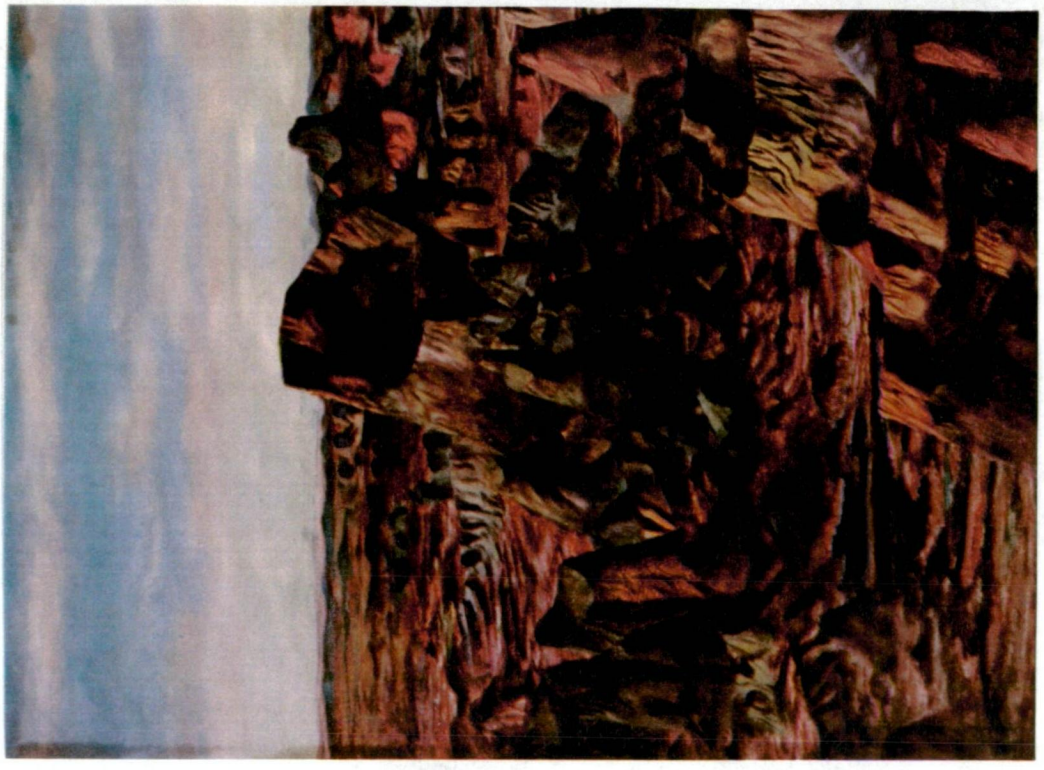


Figure 44 – *Central Australia*, 1950, ripolin on masonite, 48 x 36 in., plate 40 of *SN*.

explorers' bodies become increasingly immersed in opalescent landscapes that are at once earthly and liquid. The "transparent river, the waters of which were not needed to quench thirst," particularly intertexts with the water in Nolan's *Camel and Figure* (fig. 136), in which the water is actually the enamel of Nolan's painted board, and there is no sense in which the water depicted will be of any use to the dazed explorer of Nolan's painting.

Nolan's depictions of Burke and Wills nearing the gulf, are radical departures from conventional historiographic paintings; they are enmeshments of reality, metaphysicality, textuality, and various intertextualities that only readers can supply. I would supply various passages from *Voss* as intertexts with which to read Nolan's floating explorers. Mr Pringle makes the following comments about the folly of Voss's venture:

> "It seems to me, though, from such evidence as we have collected – which is inconsiderable, mark you – as the result of mere foraying expeditions from the fringes, so to speak, it seems that this country will prove most hostile to anything in the nature of planned development. It has been shown that deserts prefer to resist history and develop along their own lines ... I am inclined to believe, Mr Voss, that you will discover a few black-fellers, and a few flies, and something resembling the bottom of the sea. That is my humble opinion." (62)

Voss responds to this opinion, to the embarrassment of his patron Mr Bonner, with the comment:

> "Have you walked upon the bottom of the sea, Mr Pringle? ... I have not ... Except in dreams, of course. That is why I am fascinated by the prospect before me. Even if the future of great areas of sand is a purely metaphysical one." (62)

These passages intratext also with *The Eye of the Storm* where Elizabeth dreams of walking on the bottom of the sea (192). All these passages intertext with Odilon Redon's image of a *Sciapode*, 1892 (fig. 172), a fish with a human (possibly female) face, about which Elizabeth remembers when she becomes transfixed by an image in Redon's book of lithographs:

> "Do you know, Edvard, there's a dream I dream - on and off ... always in my dream I am walking on the bed of the sea ... One is always rather fluid in a dream. Or if I took on a form, I don't believe I was ever more than a skiapod." (200, 403)

White's narrator writes of Amy Parker, "[h]er eyes had a hungry glitter for something she did not possess, or as if she had not yet walked on the bottom of the sea" (*TTM* 36). Listening to Voss speaking of walking on the bottom of the sea, Laura thinks:

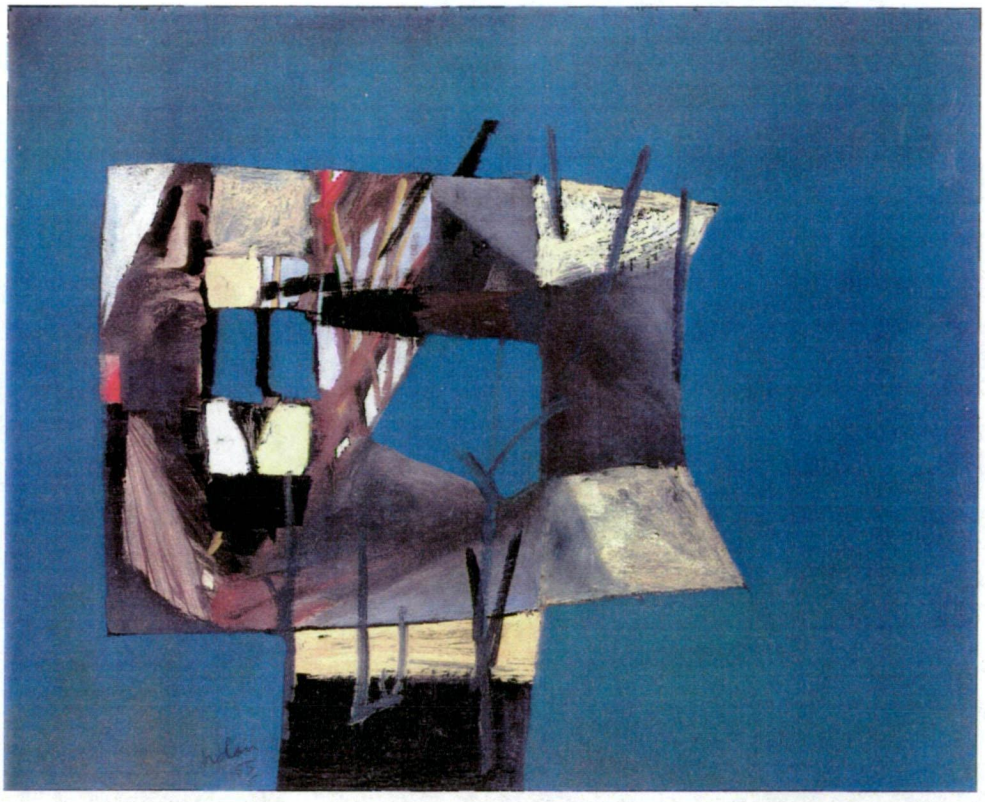
> [i]n the rapt afternoon all things were all-important, the inquiring mouths of blunt anemones, the twisted roots of driftwood returning and departing in the shallows, mauve scum of little bubbles the sand was sucking down, and the sun, the sun that was hitting them over the heads. She was too hot, of course, in the thick dress ... with the result that all words became great round weights ... It was lovely. She would have liked to sit upon a rock and listen to words, not of any man, but detached, mysterious, poetic words that she alone would interpret through some sense inherited from sleep. Herself disembodied. Air joining air experienced a voluptuousness no less intense because imperceptible.
>
> She smiled a little at this solution of *sea and glare*. It was the sun that was reddening her face. (63 [emphasis added])

These words intertext with Rimbaud's "A Season in Hell,"

> Let me sleep! Let me boil
> At the altars of Solomon ...
> At last, O happiness, O reason, I removed from the sky the blue that is black, and I lived like a spark of gold of *pure* light ...
> It is found again!
> What? Eternity.
> It is the sea mixed
> With the sun. (*Rimbaud* 199)

Deliberate readerly interlacing of Rimbaud's poetic text and the collage-web formed by the narrative of *Voss* and images by both Nolan and Redon, results in a transient moment that is enabled both by the invitations of material texts, by readerly willingness to participate in intertextuality, and also by readerly creativity in assembling the enmeshment of a diverse range of texts. The resultant collage is not necessarily universal myth, but the intertextual reading might feed into other intertextual myths as they develop, mutate, meet and fall away, in a textual interplay that operates across an enormous variety of texts in which readers are thoroughly enmeshed.

It is the peculiar triumph of this painter that when all the time we thought he was painting our landscape, our inland, our drought, he was at the same time painting a private interior space, reflecting, floating, dying.
Barrett Reid



Kelly, 1955 (fig. 45).

... for the person who has lost everything ... language is what becomes the country.
Hélène Cixous

moving from external to internal landscapes

We are taught to know that landscape (as with all material text) exists outside ourselves, and that when we read it, we convert that space into an internal, or virtual, readerly space. In "A Season in Hell" Rimbaud's speaker asserts:

> While still a child, I admired the obdurate convict on whom the prison gates always close. I visited the inns and furnished rooms he hallowed by his stay. *With his mind* I saw the blue sky. (*Rimbaud* 179)

Rimbaud's words intertext with Australian historiography and Australian artistic responses to that historiography. Kelly was both a bushranger and a convict. Australia was full of transported convicts who looked through windows in penitentiary walls at blocks of blue sky. Kelly's helmet becomes a window through which we look at slabs of blue sky as if from Kelly's point-of-view. In order to create or imagine the blue inside Kelly's helmet, however, each reader intertexts an assortment of virtual

(inter)texts that play around that textual site. Paintings are traditionally painted onto rectangular boards or canvases, simulating windows onto other textual planes. Jane Clark says of Nolan's *Kelly* [as centaur], 1955 (fig. 40) that, "as Kelly invades the landscape, so the landscape and the sky – pictorially and metaphorically – invade him" (*SNLL* 118). This comment can equally be made of *Kelly* [as centaur], 1946 (fig. 46). Nolan's images continually play with landscapes, moving without care from internal to external spaces. Rimbaud's poem resonates into both Nolan's paintings of *Kelly* [as centaur] (figs. 40 & 46), and Nolan's images intertext back into Rimbaud's poem (*Rimbaud* 179). And both artists' texts feed into White's writings. Judd is often referred to as "the convict,"

> [t]he convict laughed, as far as his straight mouth would let him ... "[This body] is not mine," he said, "any more than that gold chain, which somebody shook in the street. And when they would take the cat to me, I would know that these bones were not mine, either. Oh, sir, I have nothing to lose, and everything to find." (*Voss* 148-50)

> Nobody here, ... [Voss] suspected, looking round, had explored his own mind to the extent that would enable him to bear such experience. Except perhaps the convict, whose mind he could not read. The convict had been tempered in hell, and, as he had said, survived. (137)

Judd is a type of Christ in these lines, not owning his bones, and enduring all sorts of suffering. "The convict" of Rimbaud's poem, as it relates to both White and Nolan's various depictions of convicts, creates intertextual readings of the convict as a type of saint. He hallows the rooms in which he stays. In Australia, the escaped convicts, or convicts still at large (such as some of Nolan's Kellys), sanctify the landscapes in which they are depicted. In Nolan's *Kelly* narrative, the convict slowly metamorphoses into images of "the man-of-sorrows" (figs 112, 113, & 114). Jane Clark comments, "[s]everal of the works from the 1950s identify the outlaw unmistakably as a 'man of sorrows' with a Christ-like face full of suffering and stoic endurance, sometimes standing beneath a crucifix" (*SNLL* 120).[33] In *A Fringe of Leaves*, the convict, Jack Chance, is literally J.C., Ellen's "saviour-lover" (285).

The idea of a readerly mind, or a character's mind, inhabiting other places pervades *Voss*. *Voss* leads readers on a torturous route from Sydney to the Outback and back again, moving continually from external to mental spaces. Often it is better to

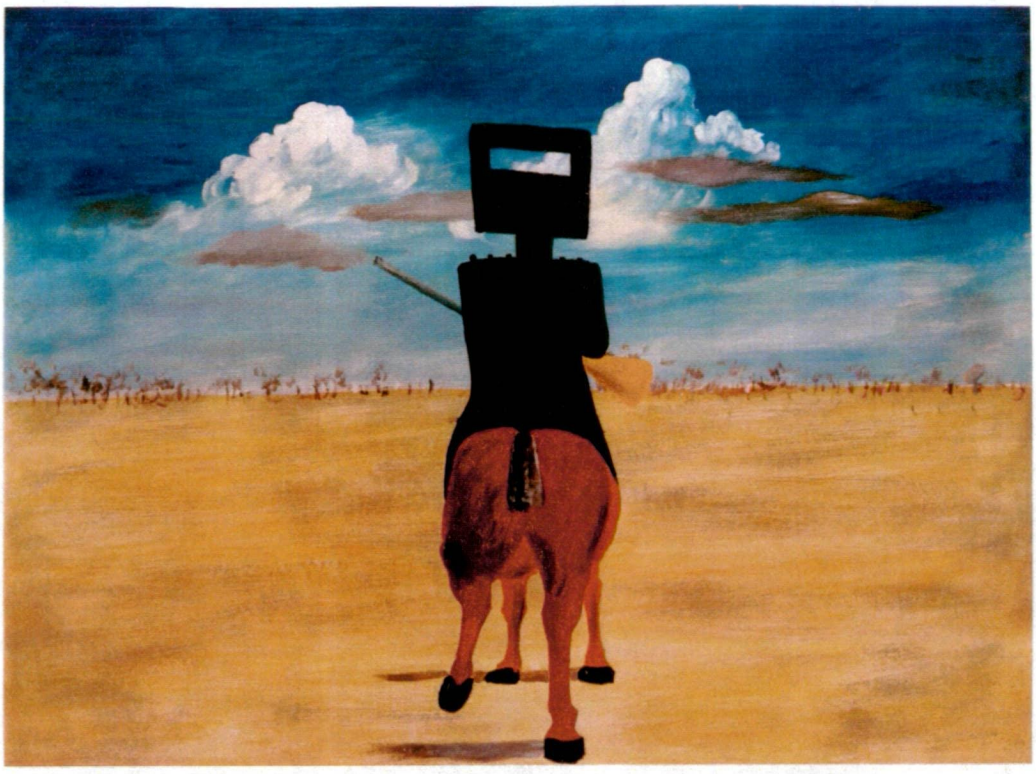


Figure 46 – *Kelly* [as centaur], 1946, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 90.4 x 121.2 cm, ANG, page 13 of *SNNK*.

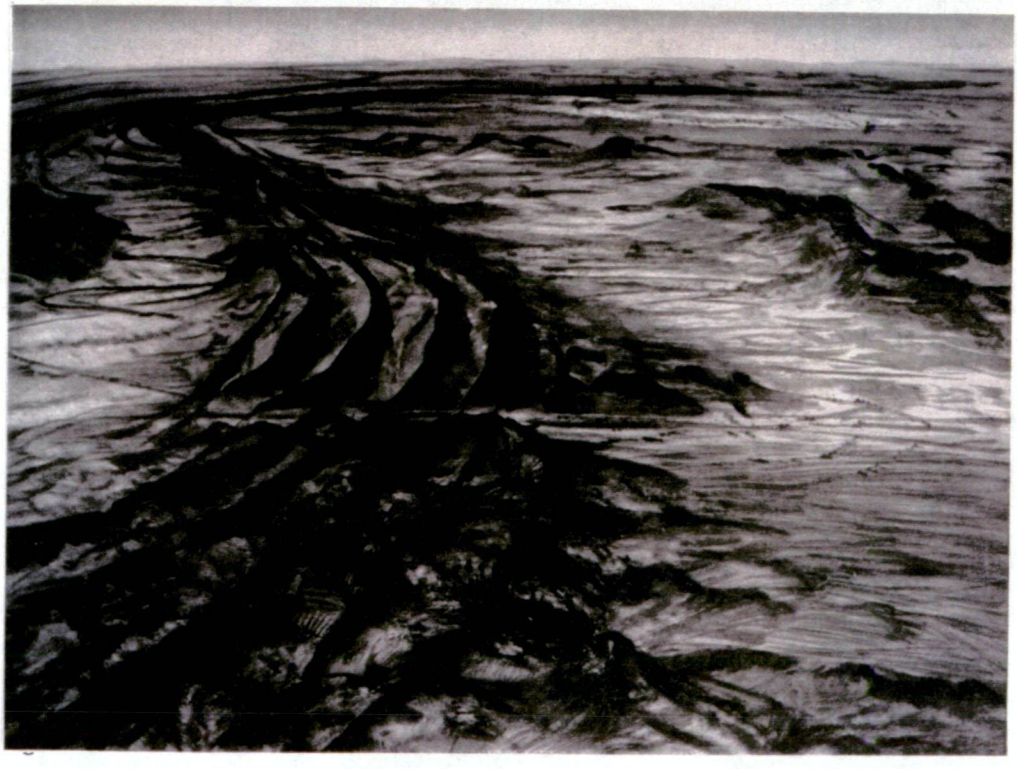


Figure 47 – *Central Australia*, 1949, ripolin on masonite, 36 x 48 in., plate 38 of *SN*.

view the writing as a surreal painting: "[t]he anatomy of the house was such that, by night, it resembled a warped skeleton, so that, for a long time, Voss lay looking at the stars on the other side of that cage of bones" (168); and "[s]o the party rode down the terrible basalt of the Bonners' deserted house, and onward. Sometimes the horses' hooves would strike sparks from the outcrops of jagged rock" (358). When Rose is in labour, "Laura Trevelyan would have prayed, but found that her mind was stuck to the roof of her mouth" (229). The suggestion of human body as larger than life means that Laura's body is both as large as a house, and the house becomes as small as a human mouth. "The white men rode home, which was what the cave had become. Paths now wound from its mouth" (285). This image of part of the landscape as a larger than life human figure intertexts with Albert Tucker's *Death of an Aviator,* 1942 (fig. 175). The nostrils of Tucker's image also inter-image with White's description of the aboriginal people, "But their silence was worse. Each hair was distinct in their *cavernous* nostrils" (335 [emphasis added]).

These images of larger than life human figures in Australian landscapes intertext with the often empty "cave" of Kelly's helmeted head, even when it is depicted as its normal size; and also with Nolan's images of Ned Kelly's head as a large monument overlooking a landscape: *Kelly in Landscape,* 1962 and *Kelly in Landscape,* 1969 (figs. 167 & 213). Voss and Laura Trevelyan discuss the land when they first meet:

> "Do you go much into your country?" asked Voss, who had found some conviction to lean upon.
>
> "Not really. Not often," said Laura Trevelyan. "We drive out sometimes, for picnics, you know ... but I am always happy to return to this house."
>
> " A pity that you huddle," said the German. "Your country is of great subtlety." (11)

Later Laura is "tired of this enclosed man" (14). Voss, who has left his native Germany in search of freedom, is perhaps looking for more than physical release. The image of an enclosed Voss, however, is not allowed to linger. The narrator draws the following comparison between Voss and Laura's uncle: "[t]hey were two blue-eyed men, of a different blue. Voss would frequently be lost to sight in his, as birds are in sky. But Mr Bonner would never stray far beyond familiar objects. His feet were on the earth" (17). Later Voss is described as surfacing mentally "out of that great

distance to which he was so often withdrawn" (31). In his second letter to Laura, Voss says, "I sit here alone in this immense country. No ordinary *House* could have contained my feelings, but this great one in which greater longings are ever free to grow" (216). The outback is an enormous house to Voss and the "furnished rooms he hallow[s] by his stay" become the vast spaces of the continent he was exploring, and the blue we can see "*with his mind*" – either that of Voss or Kelly – becomes the furnished room of an Australian landscape (*Rimbaud* 179). "[T]he leader was left alone for some little time, and then the immensity of his presumption did accuse him. The dome of silence was devoid of all furniture, even of a throne" (191). Laura says to Willie Pringle, "[i]f we were bounded by walls, that would be terrible" (322). "Then a great cry was shattering all the glass in the house. The walls were falling. Flesh subsided only gradually upon the ridge of the spine" (229). Voss describes the outback as a house and so the Bonners' house, as dreamed through Laura's delirium, becomes similarly vast. The ridge of the spine becomes the ridge of outback hills which inter-images with Nolan's *Central Australia*, 1949 (fig. 47) and also the ridge of the spines of Nolan animal skeletons (fig. 30).

The Nolan enamel of Burke and Wills, falling horses, stuffed birds, and religious trappings in an Australian outback, all resonate inter-imagically as readers traverse the pages of *Voss* :

> [t]he two men rode on, in hats and beards, which strangely enough had not been adopted as disguises. In that flat country of secret colours, their figures were small, even when viewed in the foreground. Their great horses had become as children's ponies. It was the light that prevailed, and distance, which, after all, was a massing of light, and the mobs of cockatoos, which exploded, and broke into flashes of clattering, shrieking, white and sulphur light. Trees, too, were but illusory substance, for they would quickly turn to shadow, which is another shape of the ever-protean light.(172)

This paragraph especially resonates with Kelly paintings and with the ethereal Burke and Wills as they merge ever more with the landscape (fig. 43). Voss knows that he will traverse Australia. He says to Le Mesurier when both men travel to Australia on the same ship:

> I will cross the continent from one end to the other. I have every intention to know it with my heart. Why I am pursued by this

> necessity, it is not more possible for me to tell than it is for you, who have made my acquaintance only before yesterday. (33)

Both White and Nolan's conquests of the land are analogous to those of explorers. They may not have walked from one end of the continent to the other (nor did any constructions of Burke, Wills, Leichhardt, or Voss), but they appropriated that land, and that landscape, by representing it in texts that will intertext with Australians' perceptions of actual landscape far more than explorers' maps or stories ever will.

Voss's journey, like that of Nolan or White, is never only one of moving across geography or physical landscape. Mrs Sanderson asks, "Do you think Mr Voss will be able to endure the sufferings of an explorer?" (139). "'He subjects himself continually to such mental suffering, he well may,' the husband answered" (139). Voss is continually exploring his own mind, exploring his physical surrounds, and also attempting to explore the minds of those around him:

> Nobody here, he suspected, looking round, had explored his own mind to the extent that would enable him to bear such experience. Except perhaps the convict, whose mind he could not read. The convict had been tempered in hell, and, as he had said, survived.(137)

As well as drawing what is outside into their inner landscapes, however, there is a sense in which the art of both White and Nolan is always ready to explore the fact that even those inner landscapes will one day be filled with funereal dust. At the Christmas service in *Voss*, there is a premonition of death after the devotions, when Judd finds that:

> all the scraps of knowledge with which he was filled, all those raw hunks of life that, for choice, or by force, he had swallowed down, were reduced by the great mystery of words to the most shameful matter. Words were not the servants of life, but life, rather, was the slave of words. So the black print of other people's books became a swarm of victorious ants that carried off a man's self-respect.(203)

Later, ants will carry off the self-respect of most of the explorers, along with their decaying bodies. Nolan does not depict ants, but White's words intertext with images such as Joseph Cornell's *Ants playing with cards*, c. 1930 (fig. 48) and Salvador Dali's, *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1938 (fig. 49). The idea of human beings as ants in *The Tree of Man* also intertexts with Cornell's image of ants playing cards.

> [e]ven the hulks of the shattered trees were slowly being hewn and dragged into neat heaps by the ant-men. The ant-women

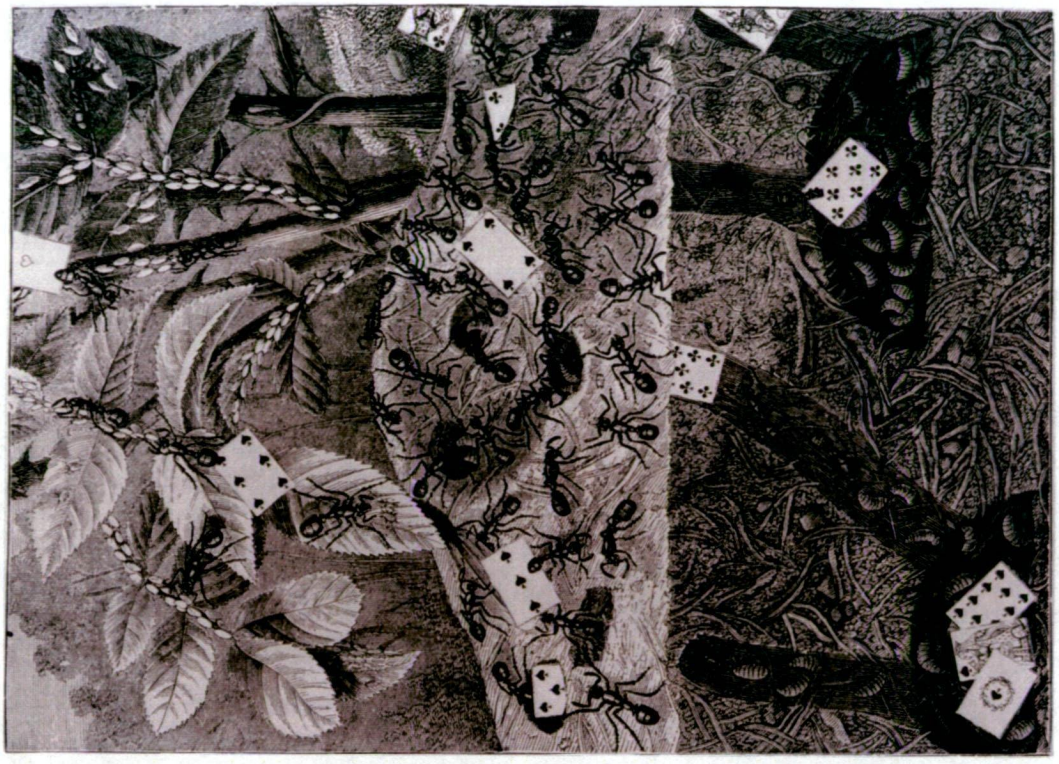


Figure 48 – Joseph Cornell, *Untitled (Ants with Playing Cards)*, c. 1930s, collage of lithograph and wood-engravings on card, 17.3 x 13.6 cm, ANG, page 115 of *Surrealism*.

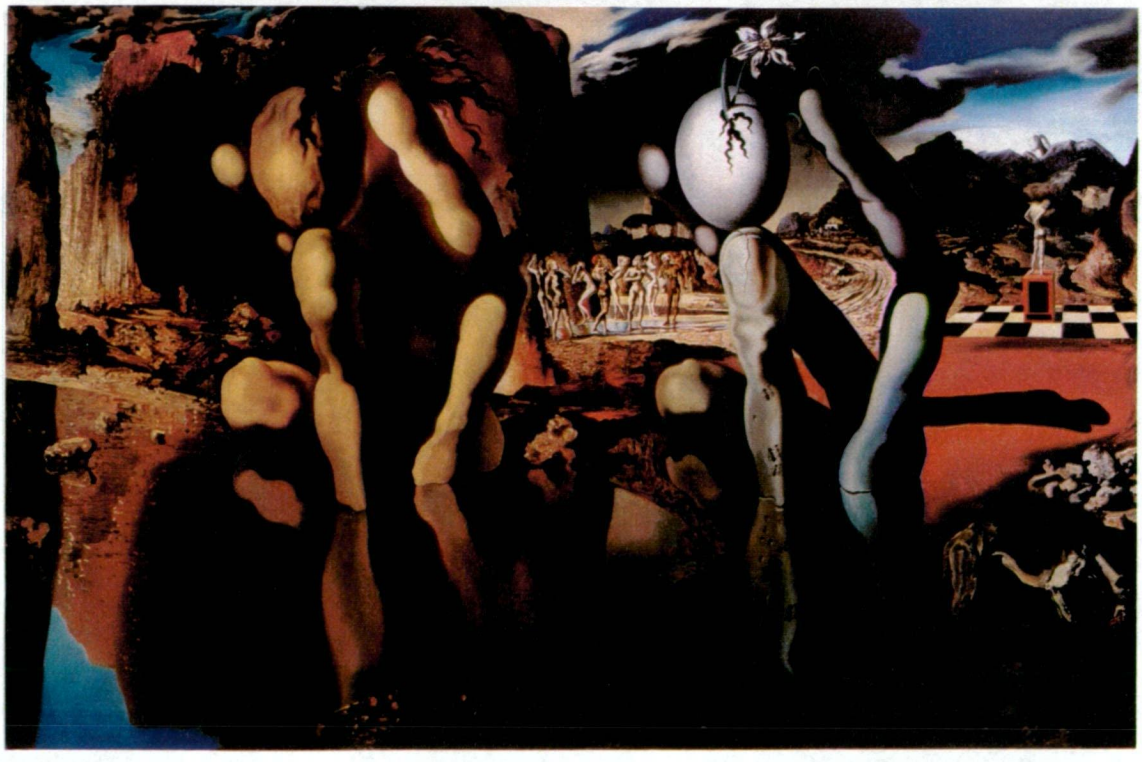


Figure 49 – Salvador Dali, *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, 1938, oil on canvas, 51.1 x 78.1 cm, Tate Gallery, London, page 57 of *Surrealism*.

> watched him in the pauses from her own endeavours ... Sometimes ... the man and woman would look out from under their sun-frowns and watch the progress of other ant-activity. (*TTM* 50).

This textual play lifts the narrator above the earth into the position of a god. Human activity is seen as futile effort. Nolan also provides many aerial views, as well as depicting floating figures who are over-seeing what is happening on earth, or departing from the earth, or in the process of defying scientific discourses that explain how the force of "gravity" keeps most matter more or less fixed upon, or around, the face of the earth. Nolan's images also play with the idea of things falling off the colonially imposed notion of Australia being at the "bottom" of the earth (figs. 79 & 177).

At Rose's funeral there is an actual storm brewing when Laura experiences a metaphysical storm:

> [t]hen, when the wind had cut the last shred of flesh from the girl's bones, and was whistling in the little cage that remained, she began even to experience a shrill happiness, to sing the wounds her flesh would never suffer. Yet, such was their weakness, her bones continued to crave earthly love, to hold his skull against the hollow where her heart had been.(235)[34]

Death mounts Mrs Bonner "pick-a-back" as she struggles up the crumbly slope of the cemetery, "and there He rode, regardless of a lady's feelings" (234). White owned Nolan's *Shakespeare Sonnet (Poet with Death's Head)*, 1967 (fig. 50) which White says, "celebrated Sonnet 146, so you see it wouldn't suit everyone" (*Letters* 269). Sonnet 146 is a meditation on mortality:

> Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth ...
> Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
> Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
> Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
> Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
> ...
> By terms dividing in selling hours of dross;
> Within be fed, without be rich no more:
> So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
> And Death once dead there's no more dying then.
> (146: 1, 3-6, 11-14)

Poet with Death's Head is also reminiscent of Hamlet with Yorrick's skull (V.i). The image of a "poet with death's head" also intertexts with Nolan's depiction of Ned Kelly's death mask in *Death of a Poet*, 1953 (fig. 111), where Kelly is both the poet

Figure 50 – *Shakespeare sonnet (Poet with Death's Head)* [based on sonnet 146], 1967, synthetic polymer paint on paper, 63.4 x 50.6 cm, AGNSW, gift of Patrick White 1974 (reproduced with their kind permission).

Figure 51 – *Quilting the armour*, 1947, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 90.5 x 121.5 cm, ANG, page 80 of *SNLL*.

and death. In a tender gesture Nolan depicts Kelly's actual death mask: bald, eyes closed and lips set after the style of Nolan's "man-of-sorrows" iconography (*SNLL* 120 [figs. 112, 113 & 114]).[35] Nolan sets Kelly's brown and beige plaster death mask amongst leaves that are largely of the same two hues, but some of which are green. Behind the loosely worked garlands of greenery is a flat, bright blue. With the helmet gone forever, the man revealed is not an outlaw, but a poet by virtue of the work's title. The work was exhibited as "Death of an Outlaw" at Redfern Gallery, London in May 1955, and as "Death of a poet" at Carnegie Institute from October to December, 1955 and thereafter (*SNLL* 120). The poet's timeless setting within the framework of this painting, and that of Nolan's wider art, allows the work to resonate with the sentiment expressed by the speaker in Shakespeare's sonnet who says that he will defy time by making the object of his love live forever within the realm of poetry:

> Yet, do thy worst, old Time. Despite thy wrong,
> My love shall in my verse ever live young.
> (19: 13-14)
>
> Nor shall Death brag thou wand'rest in his shade,
> When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
> So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
> So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.
> (18: 11-14)

In *Voss*, Voss is both materially present, and already gone. The empty sky of Ned Kelly's helmet is a reminder that every human has a body, and does not. We live inside human bodies, but we can seem strangely absent or disembodied from the body reflected to us in mirrors, the reflected body we are taught to think of as our own. If Hume says, "we always suppose an external universe which depends not on our perceptions, but would exist though we and every sensible creature were absent or annihilated ... [but] [t]he mind has never anything present to it but the perceptions, and cannot possibly reach any experience of their connexion with objects" (151,153). Of Rose's funeral, Laura writes to Voss:

> as I stood, the material part of myself became quite superfluous, while my understanding seemed to enter into wind, earth, the ocean beyond, even the soul of our poor, dead maid. I was nowhere and everywhere at once. I was destroyed, yet living more intensely than actual sunlight, so that I no longer feared the face of Death as I had found it on the pillow. (239)

Funereal imagery pervades *Voss*, leading to his ultimate death. When the Bonner women are in their carriage on the way to a picnic, "Belle giggled, and turned her face towards the hot upholstery of the dark carriage. They were beautifully protected in that padded box" (55). This passage intertexts with another padded box in Australian art, that depicted in *Quilting the armour*, 1947 (fig. 51). Kelly's helmet inter-images with *Quilting the armour*, 1947 (fig. 51), to form a type of barouche, as well as also denoting a kind of padded coffin, even if only for Kelly's head.

Brett Whitely's *Patrick White as Headland*, c. 1981 (fig. 52) enmeshes Australian landscape with Patrick White as myth, as well as with Patrick White as the

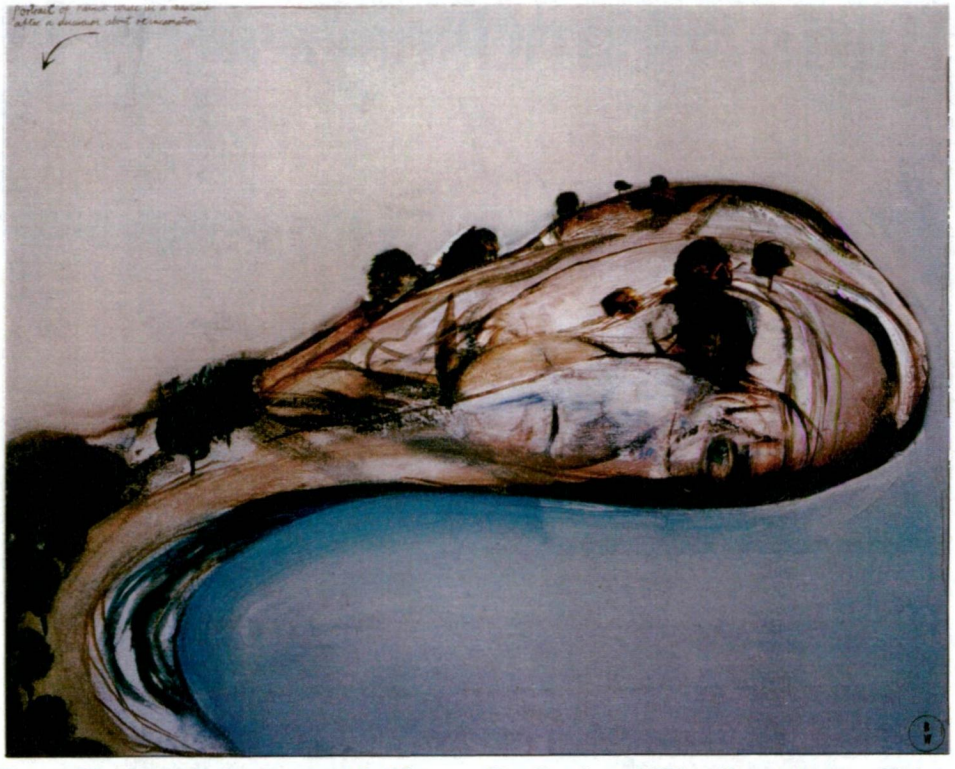
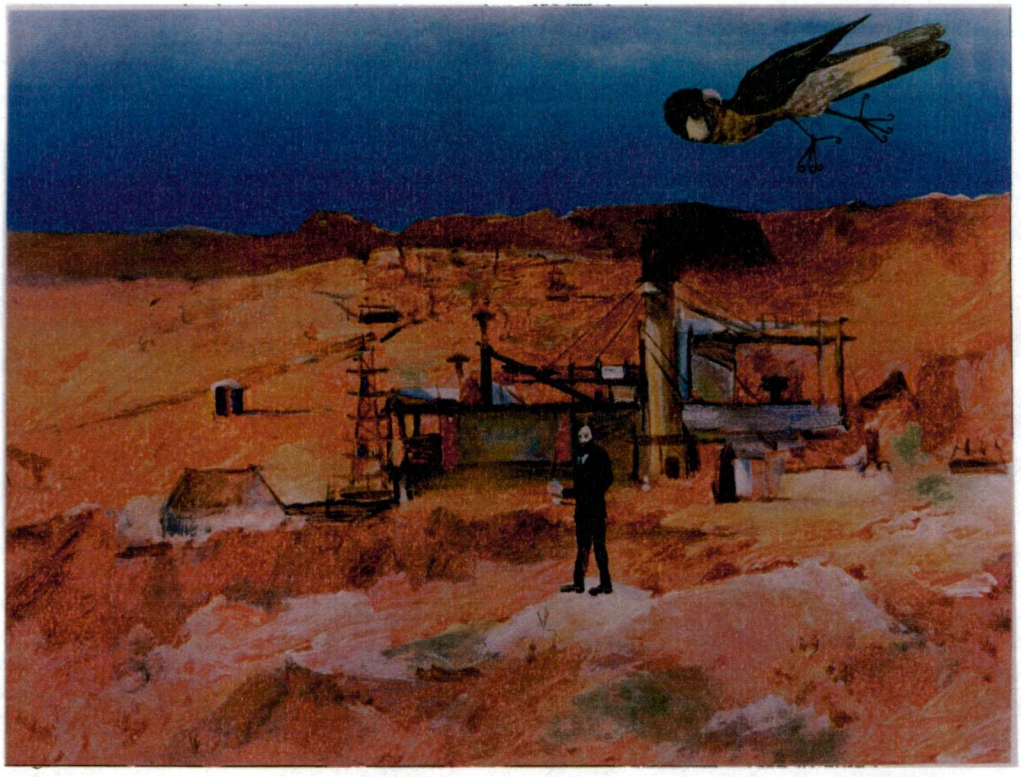


Figure 52 – Brett Whitely, *Patrick White as Headland*, c. 1981, oil on canvas, 39.4 x 49.7 cm, plate 134 of *BWAL*.

head-scape involved in making the White-texts we read. The headland also inter-images with Nolan's *Death of a Poet*, 1953 (fig. 111), especially since White's death. The painting also intertexts with this passage from *Voss*, "Some of the girls ... carefully guided their skirts past Laura Trevelyan, who had observed them all that night as from a promontory, her eyes outlined in black" (329). The *OED* describes the word *promontory* as, "[a] point of high land which juts out into the sea or other expanse of water; a headland."[36] There is a sense in which various intertextualities of

White-autobiography, White-biography, White-fiction, and images of Patrick White, can affect our understandings of the land in which we live, both geographically and as head-space. The same is true of Nolan and his works. By imagining Australia, both White and Nolan become/became part of Australian space. And their works both inscribe and intermingle with our intertextual notions of how we understand Australian space.

His little Hearse like Figure
Unto itself a Dirge
To a delusive Lilac
The Vanity divulge
Of Industry and Morals
And every righteous thing
For the divine Perdition
of Idleness and Spring
Emily Dickinson



Pretty Polly Mine, 1948 (fig. 53).

social comedy and the serious making of Australia

For all the intertexting of religion and death with the colonisation of a new land, there is also a humour (often black) that pervades the texts of both White and Nolan. There is an intertextuality that operates between White's depiction of Mr Bonner and Nolan's depictions of various merchants and businessmen who are oddly dislocated in their outback settings, while still adhering to their identities as owners of businesses. Mr Bonner is introduced to the reader as a man who is not spiritually connected with the land, in stark opposition to both Laura and Voss. Laura is aware of her lack of connectedness with the country she inhabits, "it will be some time, I expect, before I am able to grasp anything so foreign and incomprehensible. It is not my country, although I have lived in it" (29). Voss is ever attempting to commune with the country to which he has arrived in search of freedom, "I am compelled into this country" (20).

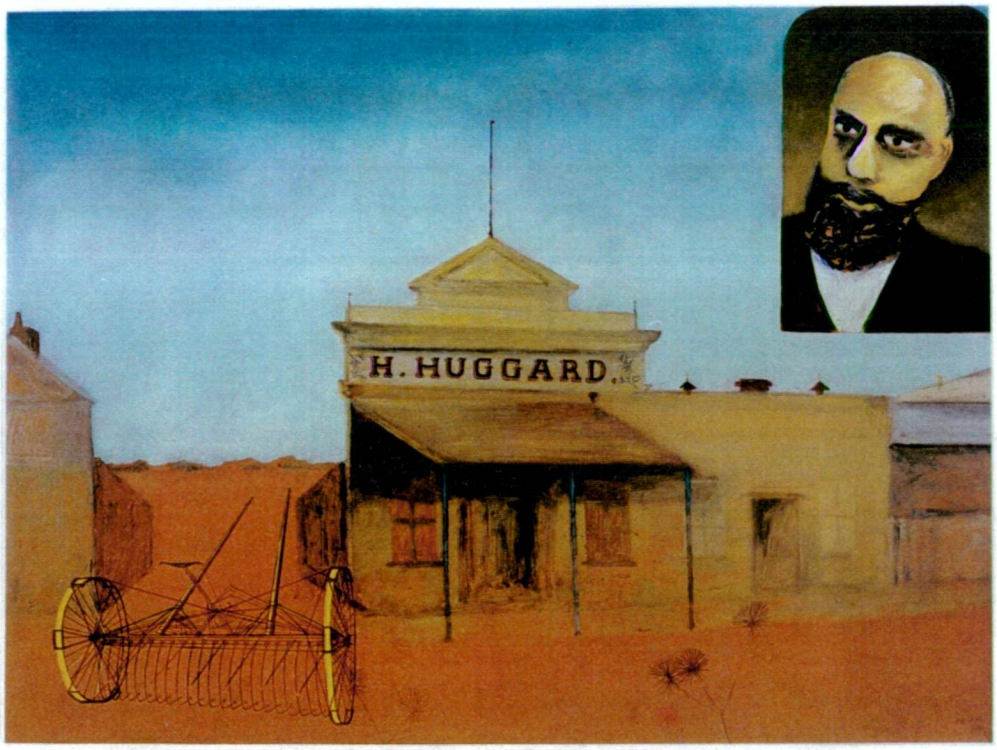


Figure 54 – *Huggard's Store*, 1948, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 91 x 122 cm, UWA, page 102 of *SNLL*.

Figure 55 – *Feeding the Birds*, 1948, ripolin on masonite, 48 x 36 in., plate 21 of *SN*.

He also continually communes with the country of his mind, "his own world, of desert and dreams" (26). In contrast to Laura and Voss,

> Mr Bonner would never stray far beyond familiar objects ... The best-quality gold leaf was used to celebrate the name of EDMUND BONNER – ENGLISH DRAPER, and ladies driving down George Street, the wives of officers and graziers, in barouche and brougham, would bow to that respectable man ... So Edmund Bonner could afford to sit with his legs stuck out, in the formidable study of his stone house.(19-20)

In *Huggard's Store,* 1948 (fig. 54) Nolan portrays the oddly displaced shop which displays the name "H. HUGGARD" in upper-case letters rather grandly across the top of the humble-looking store (*SNLL* 102).[37] The intertextuality that plays between Nolan's image of H. Huggard and his store and White's depiction of Mr Bonner is such that Mr Bonner and his business name with its "best-quality gold leaf," becomes a kind of ekphrasis of Nolan's work.

The irony of the juxtaposition of English codes against the harsh Australian landscape is deftly depicted by both artists. The capital lettering in Nolan is comic because of the fragility of those letters against the landscape is foregrounded. The capital lettering intertexts with White's text. The lettering underlines the pomposity of ownership, and the snobbery of social status is implied. The gold-leaf of Bonner's lettering is particularly ironic as it intertexts with the gold-lettering often inscribed on tombstones. Mr Bonner sits in his stone house with "his legs stuck out" because he is wealthy, but the intertextuality at work suggests that his legs will soon enough be "stuck out" for another reason, the arrival of death. Descriptions of Voss in Sydney intertext with Nolan's depictions of gentlemen looking uncomfortable in an Australian landscape:

> the German's hot coat and black sculptural trousers had an air of monumental slovenliness.(45)

> The nap of his hat had been roughed up, and he was cheaply dressed, and angular, and black.(58)

The irony of the clothing is a complex intertextuality in itself. Both the costumes of Voss and those of the gentlemen in *Pretty Polly Mine*, 1948 (fig. 53) and *Feeding the Birds*, 1948 (fig. 55) read as inappropriate dress anywhere, and as being climactically inappropriate in Australia. The dress-codes foregrounded in these readings also inter-

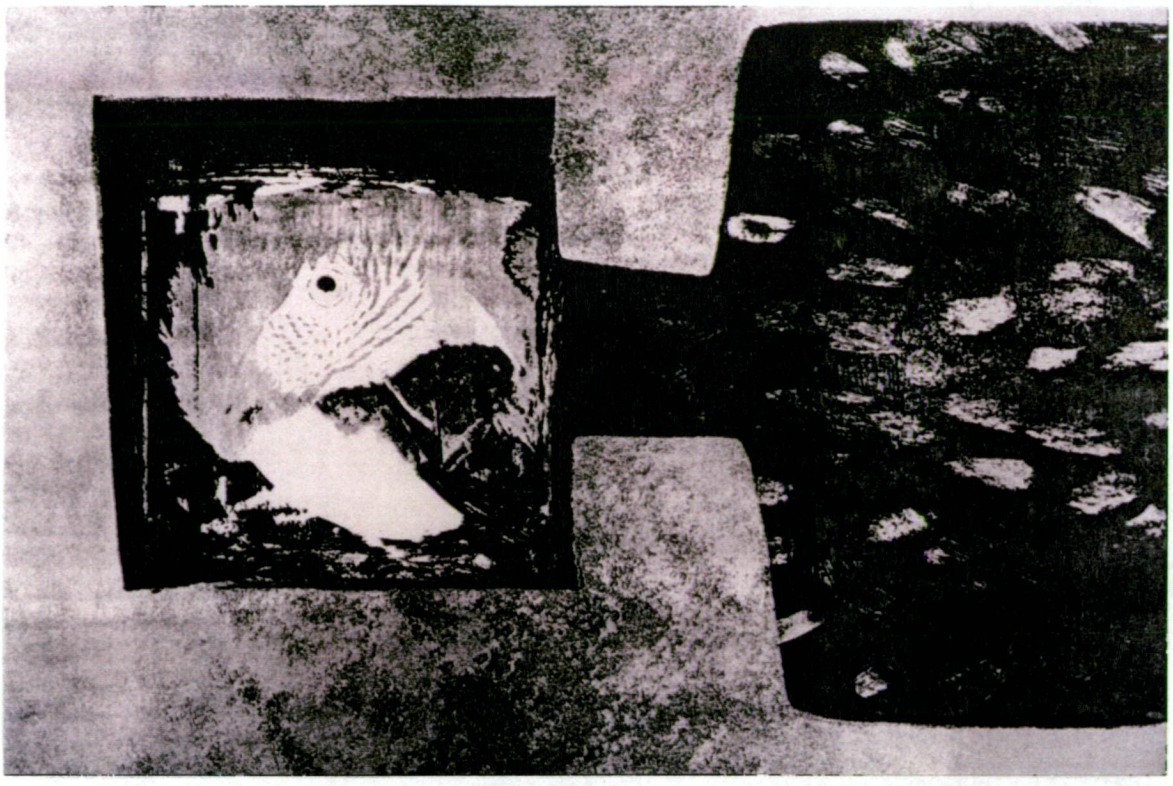


Figure 56 – *Kelly V* [parrot's head printed over Kelly helmet], 1965, silk-screen print, 62.2 x 49.5 cm, cover of *Exhibition Catalogue: Sidney Nolan*, Court Gallery, Copenhagen, 1966.

Figure 57 (repeated) – *Tarred and Feathered*, 1945, ripolin on strawboard, 63.5 x 76.1 cm, Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, page 14 of *NL*.

image with intertextual readings of the tie with "prison" bar spokes, worn by the man in *Colonial Head*, 1947 (fig. 23), and the hats with "prison" bar spokes, worn by the women in *Morning Mass*, 1943 (fig. 21), and in the Nolan illustration for the 1963 Penguin edition of *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 22).

Before Voss's journey commences the general public gathers at the Sydney dockside:

> [w]hat kind of man is he? wondered the public, who would never know. If he was already more of a statue than a man, they really did not care, for he would satisfy their longing to perch something on a column, in a square or gardens ... They did, moreover, prefer to cast him in bronze than to investigate his soul, because all dark things made them uneasy, and even on a morning of historic adventure, in bright, primary colours, the shadow was sewn to the ends of his trousers, where the heels of his boots had frayed them.
>
> Yet his face was a lesson in open hilarity. (109)

This depiction of Voss against the "primary colours" of "historic adventure" with the shadow sewn to the ends of his trousers, inter-images with both *Pretty Polly Mine*, 1948 (fig. 53), and *Feeding the Birds*, 1948 (fig. 55), and Nolan's many and varied bright ripolin historico-narratives in stark reds, blues and yellows.[38] After Voss's death, the narrator says, "The wrinkles of his solid bronze trousers could afford to ignore the passage of time" (440). This image intertexts with many a colonial public edifice in honour of someone's "valour" in "serving" the empire. At Christmas time the explorers in *Voss* sing *God Save the Queen* and hold a Church of England church service (202). There is a sense of humour about the affair as "even the most dogged devotions were shot through with a glint of parrots" (202). The reference to parrots also intertexts with Nolan's floating parrots in images such as *Pretty Polly Mine* (fig. 53). One of Nolan's 1965 depictions of Kelly is also, literally, shot through with a parrot. *Kelly V*, 1965 (fig. 56) depicts a head and shoulders version of a helmeted Kelly. A parrot's face is printed over the square helmet, and the body and shoulders are feathered, after the style of Nolan's *Tarred and feathered*, 1945 (fig. 57). Both these images also intratext with Nolan's *Secret Life of Birds*, 1940 (fig. 58) where, as with all Nolan's birds, and many of White's depictions of birds, death is only a moment away.[39]

Figure 58 – *Secret life of Birds*, 1940, collage of feathers and twigs on paper, 31.5 x 25.3 cm, ANG, page 222 of *Surrealism*.

Some of the Kelly series read as intertexting directly with the action of *Voss*. *The Slip,* 1946-1947 (fig. 59) has the inscription: "The gully was exceedingly rough and precipitous. So much so that on one occasion as we were ascending in a single file one of the packhorses lost its footing and fell" (*SNA* 66-67). Nolan comments of this painting: "[i]t is a dreadful descent and the horse will fall forever" (*SNLL* 82). Jane Clark observes: "[i]nterestingly, in a slightly earlier work he painted an almost identical horse – suspended in water, drowning, rather than hanging in mid-air" (82). "The mare was whinging but hopeful as she started back through the teeth of rocks ... On the edge of the ridge, the mare paused for a while, and was swaying, and raising her head. Then she plunged down towards what, she knew, was certainty" (*Voss* 250). Later, another horse falls:

> [t]hen, one evening as they scrambled up towards a red ridge, one of the horses, or skeleton of a gelding, of which the eyes had gone milky with blight, and the crimson sores were the only signs of life, stumbled, and fell back with a thin scream into the gully, where, he lay, and lunged, and continued to scream." (337)

The Slip for all its poignancy, however, has a comedy about it, as the horse is forever caught upside down. When read intertextually with this image, White's images of falling horses also resonate with tragi-comedy.

The device of topsy-turvy is also used in both *Death of Constable Scanlon,* c.1946-47 (fig. 108) and *Stringy bark Creek,* c. 1946-47 (fig. 109), both of which seem to portray the Australian landscape as rejecting the colonising forces of white men, even though Nolan may have intended them to be about particular historical narratives. *Policeman in a wombat hole*, 1946 (fig. 60), lends an air of humour to the historical incident it is depicting, the colonial custom of sending letters across harsh terrain, the practice of writing books (especially historical diaries), and making any textual constructions at all in the face of death. The man in this image might well be Voss with one of Laura's letters, Le Mesurier with one of his poems, or Palfreyman with some ornithological notes for his patron. The hero in this intertextual reading, however, is neither exploring land, nor in a wombat hole, but he is in the act of dying and descending, at high speed, into his grave, with the black letters written on his lined paper seeming irrelevant. White and Nolan's depictions of the bungling

Figure 59 – *The Slip*, 1946, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 90.5 x 121.5 cm, ANG, page 43 of *SNNK*.

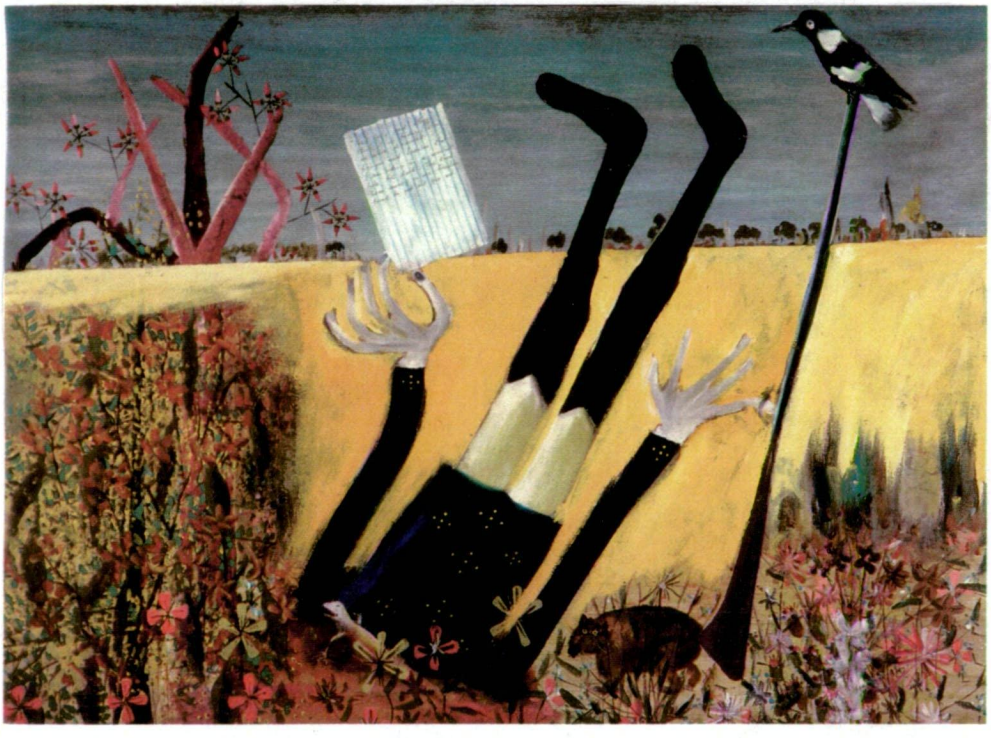


Figure 60 – *Policeman in Wombat Hole*, 1946, ripolin on board, 91.8 x 122.3 cm, Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, page 24 of *NL*.

attempts of man to "conquer" the Australian landscape, and/or to enact ridiculous dramas against the harsh Australian landscape, often read as comic (especially so when read intertextually). That humour, however, has not often been foregrounded in critical writings about their works.

Burke and Wills, 1950 (fig. 61).

the ornithologist

> "Besides," continued the ornithologist in his rather gentle voice, "... It is an opportunity in which His Grace would, I feel, be personally interested."
>
> Mr Palfreyman had been commissioned by an English peer, a petulant one left over from a previous reign, who collected all manner of things, from precious stones and musical instruments, to stuffed birds and tigers. In his Palladian house, His Grace seldom looked at his possessions, except on sudden impulse ... to delight a mistress with a branch of wired humming birds ... Until he was tired of all those lifeless objects. Then they were quickly swathed and handed to the nation." (*Voss* 46)

Mr Palfreyman is an ornithologist, and is often referred to in *Voss* as "the ornithologist," rather than as "Palfreyman." Palfreyman's trade inter-images with Nolan's depiction of stuffed-looking birds floating in the blue skies of his fictive landscapes. This inter-imagery can become part of White vocabulary. By drawing Nolan's images into our readings, the writing can be read as transcending the page, moving onto planes that are not mimetic of "reality." The writing does not operate as ekphrasis, but rather as invitation to create virtual intertextual collages that meld Nolan paintings with Australian colonial experience, with historico-mythography, and with any of innumerable other intertexts and inter-images, until the intertextual medley reaches interim conclusions in any reader's virtual space.

When Mrs Bonner throws a party for Voss's men before their departure, Tom Radclyffe, says, "with the pomposity of one who was about to become her cousin ... 'I would be curious to read little Laura's thoughts'" (82). Laura replies, "Just now, it was the drumstick on Mr Palfreyman's plate. I was thinking of the bones of a dead man, uncovered by a fox, it was believed, that I once saw in Penrith churchyard" (82). Laura begins by thinking about the bone of a dead bird (whether duck, fowl, pheasant, or pigeon) on an ornithologist's plate. There is an inter-imagery that resonates between Nolan's various birds (including a collage constructed of galah feathers [fig. 58]), and the textual play of this passage from *Voss*, around birds, an ornithologist, and dead bones.

> "I am sorry that you should have such horrid thoughts on a jolly occasion. The bones of a dead man in a grave!" Miss Hollier said. "Mr Palfreyman has been telling me such delightful, really interesting and instructive things about birds."
>
> Mr Palfreyman appeared sad.
>
> He was, in fact, happiest with birds, and realized this as he watched Miss Hollier's shining teeth. But he was wrong, he knew, unreasonably so. Some people cannot bear to touch the folded body of a dead bird." (83)

Nolan's birds are not necessarily stuffed, but they inter-image with the ornithologist's many and varied dead birds. The fact that Nolan's birds hang upside down in many of his images gives them the appearance of artefact rather than reading as attempts at mimesis. Just before the men leave by ship on the first leg of their journey, Le Mesurier says that he could not "make a fortune from merino sheep, when at the same time there is a dream of gold, or of some inland sea floating with tropical birds" (99). Turned upside down many of Nolan's birds float on the sea of the sky, but White's "inland" also refers to the inner territory of virtual space where readerly collages can have many and varied birds floating on dream-like imaginary seas; collages that are drawn from innumerable material textual sites, including those of actual reality, written art, and visual art.

Ending this section on *translation rights* with *the Ornithologist* enables me to point to the ways in which texts can be continually disrupted. Nolan told Hal Missingham that the over-sized stuffed-looking parrot that floats in the sky of *Pretty Polly Mine*, "surely [had] more right to be there ... than all those draperies and

columns and thrones and over-developed figures in a lot of Italian painting of the Renaissance" (*SNLL* 103). Nolan's birds inter-image with the vast array of objects that float, often inverted, in the art-works of Nolan. Inverted floating figures now read as Nolan vocabulary. Palfreyman, once associated with the comic stuffed-looking birds of Nolan's paintings, becomes a transcription from a Nolan painting. He is no longer a peculiarly Whitean tragi-comic, literary creation. He is a caricature imported from Nolan-landscape, and he is never entirely that: he is an intertextual creature of Australian mythography. He is not indigenous, but overlaid; an imposition upon the landscape. He is a two-dimensional, ridiculous, serious, scientist/artist, immigrant-colonist who is also a creature of fictive writing. He collects birds. He is collecting living objects from this strange country in order that they be placed inside museums as artefacts. In a sense, Nolan's collage, *Secret Life of Birds*, 1940 (fig. 58), satirises this activity. How can we know what is living, dynamic, and volatile, by stopping that vitality? Similarly, with texts, how can we ever display their actuality when the activity of texts always takes place elsewhere? The Ornithologist, as with all texts, is an unstable intertextual collage, a living entity, that will be different for every reader.

list of written epigraph sources

the language of White and Nolan
'I invented the colour of the vowels!' (*Rimbaud* 207).
myth-making:
the amalgamation of historiography,
geography, and art
"All night through the upland" (Malouf 61).
"The resultant paintings" (*SNLL* 95).
moving from external to internal landscapes
"It is the peculiar triumph of this painter" (Reid 181).
"For the person who has lost everything" (Cixous 5).
social comedy and the serious making of Australia
"His little Hearse like Figure" (Dickinson 295).

notes

[1] White had a collection of Nolan originals, most of which he donated to the AGNSW in 1974, along with works by many other artists (Heather Johnson, *A A* 68). Other Nolan images owned by White were: the original illustrations used for the E&S dust-jackets of *The Aunt's Story*, *Voss* and *Riders in the Chariot* , as well as many post-cards painted by Nolan and posted to the writer (*Letters* 113; Peter Haines of the Nolan Gallery, in conversation with me [July, 1996]). The original illustration, upon which the E&S *Voss* dust-jacket was based, was exhibited by David Dolan at the Powderworks Museum in Sydney (David Dolan in conversation with me, June 1993). There may have been other Nolan works owned by White, but they are not mentioned either by White, or in either Heather Johnson's article or Marr's works.

[2] Max Harris writes, "Even at this early moment Nolan's pay-back has churned up in me such a degree of moral revulsion that I wish to have nothing to do with him in the future in any private or public context ... Both men are implacable haters ... Robert Hughes ... must have incurred the Nolan displeasure because Nolan produced a portrait of Hughes bent over his typewriter, and defecating ... The painting hits Hughes in connection with a rather unsavoury event ... probably only to be revealed when Geoffrey Dutton's unexpurgated memoirs appear in 1998. I am in Sugar Patrick's red corner [now]" (4). And it goes on, a mixture of personal distaste, and allusions to literary and art world intrigue, with lashings of evaluative critical comment about the quality of each man's work.

[3] Barbara Mobbs in conversation with me, 17-1-1996.

[4] Barbara Mobbs in conversation with me, 17-1-1996.

[5] Tucker's portraits are: *Cynthia and Sidney Nolan*, c. 1968, 1983; *Sidney Nolan*, c. 1976, 1983; *Sidney Nolan*, 1977; *Sidney Nolan*, 1982; *Sidney Nolan*, 1983; *Sidney Nolan*, 1984; *Sidney Nolan*, 1984; and *Sidney Nolan*, 1985. As well as these portraits there are also many self-portraits in various media (including that of photography), and official photographs and film-footage of Sidney Nolan.

[6] Roy De Maistre, *Portrait of Patrick White*, 1939, AGNSW. Brett Whitely, *"Flaws in the Glass" (Portrait of Patrick White)*, 1981, used as the cover illustration for *Letters*; *Patrick White as headland*, c. 1981; *Portrait of Patrick White*, used as an illustration for *PW*. There are also many other photographed portraits of the writer, including those on the covers of his books. Sharman's documentary, *The Burning Piano* is also sub-titled as "a portrait."

[7] Anon., "Patrick White's Nightmare," *Observer* (Syd.) 1.1 (22 2.1958): 19.

[8] "One important influence at the time of *Voss* was Rimbaud. Frank Le Mesurier, the poet on Voss's expedition ... emerged from White's passion for Rimbaud. He had grown drunk on the poetry when he first discovered it, and read Enid Starkie's study of the poet several times. By the time he wrote *Voss* he was 'soaked in Rimbaud.' Le Mesurier, though he is 'a comparatively undeveloped character in the novel ... just had to be there' (*PW* 317). The comments about Rimbaud are taken from a letter to David and Gwen Moore, 8.ii. 1958; and Manfred Mackenzie, 5.i.1963.

[9] Sidney Nolan, *Paradise Garden: paintings, drawings and poems*, London: R. Alistair McAlpine, 1971, deluxe edition of 110 and twenty copies with original signed drawings.

[10] Nolan also planned to make a series of painted works based on *Voss*. White wrote to him in 1958, "It is exciting to think you may do some paintings from *Voss*" (*Letters* 139). These works did not eventuate. Had he specifically worked on such a series, it might have been made all the more significant by his ownership of the rights to make a film.

[11] This line intertexts with Nolan's image *One Must be Absolutely Modern*, 1982 from his *Illuminations* series, in which a young man is depicted sitting on top of an enormous rectangle, which in turn inter-images with Nolan's Kelly helmet.

[12] "[T]he whole business of translation is usually dubious. I often wonder about the translations of my books into languages I can't read. Those in German, for instance, are mostly slapped together with an eye to the sale and nothing else" (*Letters* 391).

[13] He had wanted a "full-scale *avant-garde* work" that was to be composed by Moya Henderson, but after the Australia Opera refused to fund her, the collaboration between the composer, Richard Meale, and the librettist, David Malouf, was formed (*PW* 605). The opera was directed by Jim Sharman. White did not want to write the libretto. After seeing a preview of the opera in Adelaide in 1982, he wrote to Meale to complain that, "the singers were wrong, the man downright bad, the woman too mellifluously perfect. They were like two giant waxworks standing there on the platform. I couldn't imagine them ever developing human passions" (*PW* 610). Certainly the opera can read as being overly serious, whereas White's novel is full of humour, albeit ironic and often black. The opera is rather nationalistic, and disregards the textual interplays that perfuse the novel on many levels.

[14] The boomerang logo is also present, at the publisher's initiative, on the cover of the 1963 Penguin edition of *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 22).

[15] The image also intertexts with these lines from Rimbaud's poetry: "I will come back with limbs of iron and dark skin and a furious look. By my mask they will think I am from a strong race" (*Rimbaud* 177).

[16] Arthur Boyd, *Arthur Boyd: Retrospective*, Barry Pearce, ed., Sydney: AGNSW, 1994.

[17] Alf might be read as an aboriginal person expressing his faith in his own art, in the art of indigenous people, and/or in art that is not "realism," rather than the insipid art that is mediated through the expectations of Mrs Pask (the Reverend Calderon's sister), and the market-driven art-world of Norman Fussell and Humphrey Mortimer (*RC* 326, 364-67).

[18] The "Jack-Knife" also intertexts with Jack Chance who slit Mab's throat, and whom Ellen fears may slit her own: "'I killed 'er. I slit 'er throat' ... Now that they were again lovers he might suspect her of faithlessness, and kill her in the night with his little axe" (*AFL* 291).

[19] "And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white as light" (Matthew 17:2).

[20] Marr writes of the origins of Miss Hare, "Hare is an earth spirit ... White took her name from *The Lady and the Hare*, John Layard's study of hares as sacrificial creatures in many mythologies" (*PW* 360).

[21] For instance, *Target Practice*, 1954; *Kelly*, 1958; *Head*, 1956; *Hungary*, 1956; *Kelly V (Head of Ned Kelly)*, 1965; and *Untitled (Kelly)*, c. 1946.

[22] *The Glenrowan Siege*, 1955 has wallpaper painted in large squares so that the flowers and stems on the wallpaper almost double as plants in the painted landscape. Nolan says, "People used peacocks as 'watch birds'; they could see people two miles off. I was amused by the oddity of peacocks in Australian and their being put to such a use" (*SNNK* 30).

[23] This imagery also intertexts with various of Poe's writings, such as "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "William Wilson," which are both informed by imagery of doubling, distorted mirroring, and the Narcissus myth.

[24] Critics are still searching for the Great Australian Novel, or at least, they continue to debate whether or not it is elusive or actual possibility. Murray Waldren writes: "Captain Ahab had his whale; Australian publishers and writers have the Great Australian Novel" (19).

[25] The saddle visible on one of the camels exhibits a curl (which also often appears as an ornamental trigger in the guns of the *Kelly* series. In *Kelly*, undated (c. 1946) and *The Chase*, 1946, the triggers of the guns are totally unusable, being back-to-front; and in *Stringybark Creek*, 1946 (fig. 109), and *Death of Sergeant Kennedy at Stringybark Creek*, 1946, the guns' triggers are usable, but ornamental, in their configuration. These decorative curls intertext with cartoonist Michael Leunig's *Mr Curly* series of cartoons, which portray a whimsical cartoon figure wearing a curly hat, curly shoes who is often surrounded by other curly things ("Glimpses of Curly Flat: Mr Curly's Home Town," in *A Bag of Roosters*, Melbourne: Angus & Robertson, 1983). The flowers often depicted in both the *Kelly* and the *Explorer* series also lend an air of gentleness and whimsy to these works.

[26] The "splendour of enamels" is discussed more fully in section three of this thesis.

[27] This image intertexts with Brett Whitely's meandering roads and rivers that also look like "alimentary canals": for instance, *Baudelaire's Drive*, 1975; *Sunset on the Sofala Road*, 1974; and *Summer at Carcoar*, 1977.

[28] *Desert*, 1952 (fig. 31) inter-images with a work by Albert Tucker, *The Metamorphosis of Ned Kelly*, c. 1955, [in which a man is riding a horse that has a hole in its body with what looks like either ribs or ragged remains of flesh, or a mane blowing through that hole].

[29] The character drawn by Nolan on the E&S cover, however, also bears a strong resemblance to William Strutt's depiction of the German-born *Ludwig Becker*, 1860 (fig. 62). Becker was a scientist,

Figure 62 – William Strutt, *Ludwig Becker*, pencil, Burke and Wills sketchbook, Victorian Parliamentary Library, page 53 of *BW*.

an eccentric, and an artist whom Burke did not want on his expedition, but whom he later supported because no-one else had Becker's knowledge. Nolan could easily have come across the figure of Becker in his research for the *Burke and Wills* series. Nolan's illustration also resembles Bunce, the botanist on Leichhardt's expedition. White lamented the fact that he ended up with "the fat amiable botanist" instead of the thin and prickly figure of "Voss" from an earlier draft drawing sent by Nolan to White on a post-card which "got the character to perfection" (*Letters* 160).

[30] Marr likens the telepathic communication of Laura Trevelyan and Voss to the communication of White and Manoly Lascaris during the second World War. In the section entitled "Fate" of *The Burning Piano*, Marr says, "Their love was at a distance. They communicated by thought, by letter, by wish."

[31] Nolan's textual play with hats has an ironic intertextuality with the biographical fact that, "[a]t sixteen, Nolan left ... [a] sign firm and began to work in the art department of a factory making men's hats. He stayed there for years, working as a designer on the hats themselves as well as advertising and display work" (Robertson, *SN* 38).

[32] "Before he died Burke said to John King: 'I hope you will remain with me here till I am quite dead – it is a comfort to know that someone is by; but when I am dying, it is my wish that you should place the pistol in my right hand, and that you leave me unburied as I lie'"(*SNLL* 107).

[33] "He was dispossessed and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" (The book of Isaiah 53: 3). This passage is used in George Frideric Handel's *Messiah.*

[34] This image of a human being with a little cage for a body also intertexts with some of the Michael Leunig's cartoon-images. For instance, *The Travelling Leunig*, Ringwood: Penguin, 1990.

[35] This painting intertexts with Magritte's *Painted Plaster Mask*, 1935, which depicts Napoleon's death mask depicted as if the face is covered with blue sky and white clouds, colour plate 19 of A.M. Hammacher, ed., *René Magritte*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1974.

[36] "Promontory" also intertexts with Rimbaud's "Illuminations" which have a section called "Promontory:"

> The golden dawn and the tremendous evening find our brig out at sea, opposite this villa and its dependencies, which form a promontory as extensive as Epirus and the Peloponnesus, or as the large island of Japan, or Arabia! Temples lighted up by the return of theories, tremendous views of modern coastal defences; dunes illuminated by warm flowers and bacchanalia ... the biggest buildings of Italy, America, and Asia, whose windows and terraces, now full of lighting appliances, drinks, and redolent breezes, are opened to the spirit of the travellers and nobles – who allow by day all the tarantellas of the coast and even the ritournellas of the illustrious valleys of art, to decorate in a miraculous way the façades of the Promontory Palace (245-7).

[37] In *The Agricultural Hotel*, 1948, the name of "J. SHEEHAN. AGRICULTURAL. HOTEL." is inscribed on the front of a hotel. A black-suited man is standing centre-front of the hotel.

[38] *Feeding the Birds*, 1948 (fig. 55) was used as the cover illustration for Randolph Stowe's *Tourmaline*, London: Macdonald, 1963.

[39] These images and many of Nolan's other images of parrots intertext with the surname White gives to Frank and Fanny Parrott in *The Aunt's Story*, so that Theodora's sister and brother-in-law become "the Parrotts" (112).

Duchamp, *Fountain*, 1917 (fig. 63).

> The world is filled to suffocating ... Every word, every image, is leased and mortgaged. We know that a picture is but a space in which a variety of images, none of them original, blend and clash. A picture is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centers of culture ... We can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original ... The viewer is the tablet on which all the quotations that make up a painting are inscribed ... A painting's meaning lies not in its origin, but in its destination.
>
> Sherrie Levine

the Original

Notions of ownership and single authorial/artistic production of texts affect our ideas about intertextuality. How can works be as readily trespassed with otherness if all texts arise from anonymous sources, and if they are owned by no-one and by everyone? Photographic reproductions of originals become material originals in their own right. Artists like Sherrie Levine and Barbara Krueger exploit this fact in order to explore the appropriation and revision of textual originality, and to make feminist statements about authorial power. In order to simplify my discussion, however, I use the word "original" to denote art-works manufactured by Nolan rather than their reproductions, even though it is possible to argue that each reproduction is an original

in its own right. I don't regard the "vandalisms" or "inter-imagic readings" that I create (figs. 5, 6, 100, 102, 210, 215, 217, 218) as "originals," but rather as creative intertextual variations of reproductions of Nolan's works, that are themselves part of a wider signic flux. An imagined original Nolan work (constructed from viewerly interaction with reproductions and other [inter]textual information) might not differ substantially from a viewerly recollection of a Nolan work resulting from interaction with an actual material original Nolan work. The social and cultural forces that govern the ownership and value (both cultural and monetary) of material texts, however, require that we acknowledge that the two similar virtual texts are definitively different.

Where does an "original" material work of art reside then, the work that was made by an author or an artist? No Sidney Nolan original will be brought into this thesis because of the nature of the artistic media used by Nolan. Originals are owned by various individuals and institutions, and can be valuable objects in this society. Even if an actual Nolan were obtained, it would have to be reproduced in order to take its place in this thesis. We might think of material original Patrick White works as being original manuscripts, and as such, no original work will be brought into this thesis. Except for the manuscript of *Memoirs of Many in One*, all White's manuscripts have been destroyed. The only existing manuscript is now a valuable national treasure, as well as a source of literary intrigue.[1] Is a manuscript, however, really the original component of a work of literary art? Or is originality only to be found inside the minds of authors? And, if so, how is that originality to be accessed?

In a sense, an original site for a work of art cannot be located; readerly and viewerly interactions with "original" works of art are all different. Even artists do not have special access to their works. They can only ever access their own perceptions of their works, even though they participated in the construction of the materiality of those works. There is no objective place, outside human perceptions, for material originals to reside. Material originality is perhaps more apparent in the realm of the plastic visual arts, but difficult to locate in the world of literature where the process of material production is immediately followed by mass-reproduction, and where "original" manuscripts are routinely lost during the process of continuous editing,

and/or deliberate destruction. There is a process of editing that takes place during the production of a painting, but its materiality usually lies underneath layers of paint. Earlier textual materialities could be excavated, but the cost in accessing their actuality would usually be, destroying the final work. Earlier writings, drawings, or paintings, however, can only exist as material entities that are separate to the final "original." In the world of computer word-processing, earlier written works often don't even exist on computer disks. Editing on computer often means losing the evidence of the process involved in written textual production.

What we call a material original, then, is a material work of art that is declared by its maker to be finished, or to be ready for release into a public arena. That is, the process of material production by a work's author/s has ended. The processes of publishers, gallery owners, marketing forces, and other societal influences on that original, however, continue to modify it. The boundaries of an "original" work (whatever its textual medium), are always blurred. We know that what we call "material originals" exist then, but once those originals are encountered by readers, they are re-moulded into virtual intertextual collages. Virtual texts may be appreciated, criticised, forgotten, or even deliberately altered (or vandalised) to the extent where they no longer resemble the material texts from which they were drawn.

All the Nolan texts in this thesis will be reproductions that change the colour, texture, and size of the original works. How do these material changes affect textual transferences of Nolan's works? If an actual Nolan work that has had wide public exposure is bought by an owner, who wishes to keep that work hidden away from the public eye, are viewers entitled to develop an idea of what the original work looks like by viewing gallery-approved reproduction slides that are projected onto a wall to the work's exact size? Is the study of gallery-approved photographs that are less than the size of the work, while remembering the dimensions of the original, an acceptable way to access the now hidden work of art? Is the general public entitled to remember the original by looking at colour picture-postcards, or colour reproductions in books? Is it possible to know a coloured work, to some degree, by viewing a black-and-white reproduction, even if that black-and-white image is not accompanied by written

descriptions of the colours and other aspects of the physical work that are not transferable via black-and-white photography? Is looking at reduced reproductions of paintings, without knowing anything about a work's actual dimensions, an acceptable way to view art? In all these cases the fact that an actual artefact exists, or that it did exist at some time, is assumed. In a society that takes textual reproduction for granted, the privileged position of an original artwork is losing its power.

Malraux wrote of the *musée imaginaire* or "museum without walls" which is the "vast and increasing repertoire of more or less faithful photographic reproductions which now makes it possible to discuss works of art without having been to the actual museums containing them" (*DMT* 407). Running parallel to this idea are Baudrillard's "simulations," and Debord's "spectacles." Baudrillard says "[t]he Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false; it is a ... machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real" (25). The epigraph used to precede Debord's chapter "Separation perfected," states "sacredness is held to be enhanced in proportion as truth decreases and illusion increases, so that the highest degree of illusion comes to be the highest degree of sacredness" (i)[2] The labyrinthine trail of Debord's argument leads to mesmeric, mirror-chamber-like conclusions:

> [t]he spectacle obliterates the boundaries between self and world by crushing the self besieged by the presence-absence of the world and it obliterates the boundaries between true and false by driving all lived truth below the *real presence* of fraud ensured by the organisation of appearance.(219)

Illusion, however, is the basis of intertextuality. The political implications of this statement, however, must remain, for now, as potential intertexts with this study.

When we do interact with material original works of visual art (unless we own them and live in their presence), we often spend less than an hour with those works in a gallery or other exhibition-space, usually less than fifteen minutes. It is the action of our own virtual intertextual readings that allow us to live with art-works. Many people consider that viewing the material actuality of an original work of art, in good light, with no one else around, is the best way to interact with art: "You don't come to look at the paintings [at an exhibition opening]. If you're all that keen, you come back on a morning when there's nobody here" (*TV* 579). Such a set of viewing possibilities, and

many others, however, are difficult to arrange, and in many ways, the sentiment belongs to an élitist perception of the world of art that has been questioned and eroded over the course of the twentieth-century.

In a 1963 edition of *Art and Australia* is a photograph of a drawing room, in which Nolan's *Figures in Tree*, 1957 (fig. 116) is exhibited next to Boyd's *Burning*. These works are set amidst seven other fine Australian paintings at the Carnegie homestead. The caption reads, "Drawing room at Kildrummie" (40). Michael Shannon writes, "Paintings should be lived with; they enrich our daily lives and it is preferable that they should not be arranged perfectly in a cold, elegant but infrequently visited gallery. At Kildrummie ... [the works] are appreciated, nurtured and loved" (34). The economics associated with this sentiment are not even considered. It was into this world of artistic snobbery (and the unquestioned economics of artistic patronage) that both White and Nolan released their art – a world in which originals were considered to be superior to reproductions; novels were better than cinematic translations; and postcards were low on the hierarchy of art-forms. These ideas can now be seen as constructs with various political agendas. Some viewers might prefer to see original art-works in their material actualities. For equally valid personal or political reasons, however, other viewers might prefer the imaginative and artistic freedom to enter art-works through computer-simulated, photographic, cinematic, or other forms of reproduction, so as not to be surrounded by associations that can be imported when viewing art in certain highly coded contexts.

As a prolific artist, Nolan's works are distributed globally and many important works are in inaccessible, private collections. This thesis includes colour photocopies of colour photographs of original works where possible. In many cases, however, in order to signify original art-works, colour photocopies have been made of photographs (which have been reproduced from the colour-plates of quality books or exhibition catalogues). There are changes in colour that take place as a work is reproduced. Reproductions of art-works move in a hierarchy of images from "most like original" to "least like original," depending upon a number of factors: the quality of reproductive apparatus used, the number of generations that separates a reproduced

image from the original work of art it aims to represent, and whether or not those reproductions are high quality colour photography, lower quality colour photography, colour photocopy, high quality monotone photography, lower quality monotone photography or black and white photocopy.[3] When colours are reproduced, however, whether or not a reproduced blue (or grey) is exactly the same hue as the original work of art, is only one of a multitude of variable factors that will be considered by readers (or ignored), for innumerable reasons. There is no objective way of knowing whether or not what our eyes see is the same. Common sense, however, and some studies, indicate that all interactions with the same work of art are probably quite different, even on the level of visual perception alone. Once the myriad other virtual intertexts, (that may, or may not, intertext with a work when it is viewed by different readers), are added to any intertextual reading equation, it hardly seems likely that anyone could see the same art-work. All those variables exist even if the same viewer interacts with the same work at different times, places, and/or contexts. What used to be assumed as a relatively fixed entity, the material original, is in a state of perpetual flux.

The copyright associated with visual art-works is also a complicated arena with many agendas. Ownership of copyright is worth money. There is such a thing as fair-dealing, but whereas slabs of written text can be reproduced (within copyright provisions) without cost, the imagic vocabulary of artists almost always involves monetary exchange. In 1994 the then Minister for Justice in Australia, Duncan Kerr, circulated a Discussion Paper, "Proposed Moral Rights Legislation for Copyright Creators." This paper is not concerned with the financial considerations of copyright, but rather "the intellectual input and creativity associated with the authorship of a copyright work" both of which are seen as "separate and distinct from an author's economic rights," such as "the rights of reproduction, publication, adaptation, and public performance, that are provided for under the Copyright Act" (Daniels, point 3). The paper proposes that there be a "right of integrity [so that authors might have] the right to object to the distortion, mutilations or other modification of, or derogatory action with respect to, a work, which prejudicially affects the honour or reputation of

the author" (Daniels, point 3). Both the copyright laws that affect physical reproduction of art-works, and those that seek to monitor modifications of that art-work, affect the operation of intertextuality. How can we discuss the intertextuality of visual art if reproductions of original works cannot be made? How can either material or virtual intertextual collages be made if, like the collages of Max Ernst, those collages are labelled as plagiarisms, or breaches of moral copyright? I make some vandalisms of reproductions of Nolan's art-works (figs. 102, 210, 215), not to "prejudicially affect the honour or reputation" of that artist, but to trespass textual boundaries. These vandalisms are attempts to read and write and scribble intertextually, to open up the ways in which reading art intertextually might take place, and to liberate the ways in which writing those intertextual readings might take place.

Given that neither manuscripts nor authorly intention are sites of originality for the writings of Patrick White, what constitutes an original White work? We do not have to visit galleries to view them, although viewing some of his first-edition works, with dust-jackets in good order, requires a visit to a library that is sensitive to the fact that illustrated dust-jackets and paperback covers have historical and artistic value as textual artefacts. Both dust-jackets and paperback covers are often removed from books by librarians, and destroyed. A book is an entirety, however. It is not merely comprised of its printed words, and the meanings of those words. The hard and soft-covers of books, and their illustrations, are integral components of those books. As the genre of the artist's book rises in importance, the integrity of whole books as art-works is becoming better understood. White took a great deal of care, when he was able, selecting the sorts of covers he thought would complement his writing. He was also very particular about having his texts reproduced as he had written them. He fought to have the words and punctuation that he had written, reproduced by his publishers. His books continue to be published, and we assume that the words and punctuation have not, and will not, be altered. We assume that publishers, agents, and scholars ensure the integrity of an author's text, just as we expect that vandalism of paintings will not be tolerated by those who have responsibility for them. While the protection of material texts is important, however, the operation of intertextuality

means that the integrity of a material text is only ensured until it enters the myriad virtual texts with which it will intersect as it is mediated during the reading process. It is odd then that we consider the fixity of material texts as given, and also that many of our reading theories concentrate on supposedly fixed texts, when all texts are translated into wildly varying and unmappable, intertextual, virtual, readerly collages in virtual spaces where there are no fixed rules.

There are institutions, ideologies, market forces, and many other reasons why writing is called literature, discourse, polemic, pulp fiction, hermeneutics or "mere" graffiti. The same sorts of forces determine why art is called art. Duchamp's urinal (fig. 63) provoked reams of critical discourse, while the "original" *objet d'art* disappeared. Duchamp's ready-made work of art, which was also a urinal, was literally replaced by commentary. This critical discourse would ensure *Fountain*'s right to have existed as art, and also the right for similar works of art to occur in the future. Acknowledging the power of words to affect works of art, I have chosen to refer to the writing of White as art, text and writing, and the paintings of Nolan as art and text, thereby evading the ideological implications of the words Literature, literature, and Art. White's writing often aspires to be an ekphrasis of the images imagined by White. White's writing can be read as art in the medium of words.

The notions of text and art no longer exist as unquestioned entities. Michel Foucault writes:

> [t]he frontiers of a book are never clear-cut: beyond the title, the first lines, and the last full stop, beyond its internal configuration and its autonomous form, it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other texts, other sentences: it is a node within a network ... The book is not simply the object that one holds in one's hands; and it cannot remain within the little parallelepiped that contains it: its unity is variable and relative. (Foucault, *Archaeology* 23)

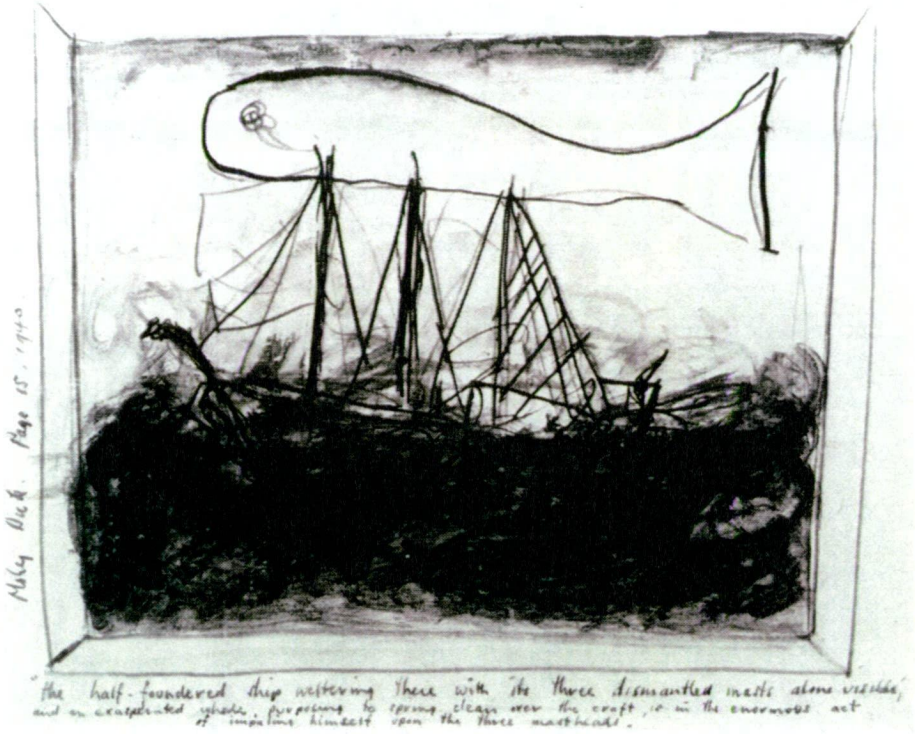
Foucault's description of a book can be revised in order to describe canvas and paint, or cardboard, pencil, oil, and Kiwi boot polish:[4] The frontiers of an entire *oeuvre* are even less "clear-cut."

Understanding the process of reading intertextually, we begin to realise how incomplete all texts are. Readers intertext their own words, images, and other (inter)texts with the works with which they interact. Writing of the "block-buster"

approach to the 1987 retrospective of Nolan's work, Barrett Reid attempts to disassociate his own discourse from the medium in which he is inevitably involved:

> [w]ords, words, words. As we walk to this exhibition they swarm into our heads, buzz like blowies before our eyes. Only the school children endlessly de-bussed in their hundreds are likely to be unaffected by all this awful, if necessary, hyperbole. Perhaps a few of them ... will skid to a stop ... and bring to it what these paintings ask of all of us: an unshielded eye, a momentary suspension of an accumulated culture. "If you want to know how strawberries taste," said Goethe, "ask children and birds."(Reid 179)

Unless we can, in future time, enter the minds of others and experience life (and art) directly as they do, we will continue to be constrained by the confines of language (usually the language of written or spoken critical commentary), to share our responses about art (especially when those responses are made within academic institutions). Written language is problematic, though, because it shares the same medium as the written art it relates to, thereby creating a lack of distinction between art and commentary (even though it has been established that, theoretically, there is no need to have such distinctions [Ulmer 86]). Some of the inter-imagic readings I make in this thesis are attempts to "write" in visual language. In contrast, visual art critics are stifled by the fact that they continually have to describe in words, as acts of ekphrasis, the art they see, art which has been constructed in another material medium. Even if they want to reproduce that art visually, they must rely on various tools of photographic reproduction, and all the technical and philosophical problems inherent in that form of textual transference. Critical acts of ekphrasis (and the inclusion of photographic texts), are necessary, however, if critics want their responses (to the plastic arts) to be understood more directly than they might be comprehended, if critics were always to paint their responses to interacting with visual art. Nonetheless, we continue to interact with art and writing, and with critical commentary about art and writing (whatever the textual media of that commentary), we continue to attempt to describe what it is that happens when we do, and how all those texts inter-relate to the various other (inter)textual media in which they are situated.



Moby Dick, 1940 (fig. 64).

> Novelists, unlike poets and historians, are often asked the absurd and rather discourteous question "What is your last book about?" ... and the answer I would advise a novelist to give is this: "Save your obviously valuable time and read only the epigraph, which is usually printed on the title page, for the epigraph is what the novel is about."
>
> Graham Greene

> [Ekphrasis] must through hearing operate to bring about seeing.
>
> Hermogenes

> The star wept rose-coloured in the heart of your ears ...
>
> Rimbaud,
> "The Star Wept."

epigraphs, visual epigraphs, and ekphrasis

Greene's whimsical quotation, here translated into an epigraph, precedes a book that is made up entirely of a chronological listing of the titles of Greene's novels and their epigraphs, with an occasional ironic note by the author. Greene's book *Why the Epigraph?* might easily be categorised as an artist's book. Greene would appreciate the irony of such a work being classified as a *livre d'artiste* when any of his novels, if not all, would probably be relegated, by Ulises Carrión, a proponent of *livres d'artistes*, to the genre of "**novel, that is to say, a boring book pretending not to be such**" (Carrión 34).[5] Greene's ironic suggestion that epigraphs are "what the novel is about," is not *the* function of epigraphs. Epigraphs have a number of potential functions, and need not signify what a work is about at all, even though they can have

that function. Perhaps one of the most obvious literary intertexts is the written epigraph, where authors place a piece of someone else's writing inside their own parallelepiped. An epigraph that precedes an entire work sits inside the book, usually on its own page (sometimes with a few other epigraphs), and that page is usually after the dedication page. Dedications are another sort of intertextuality again.

The fact that *The Vivisector* is dedicated "For Cynthia and Sidney Nolan" could be read as an invitation to read the novel with the life and works of both Cynthia and Sidney Nolan in mind, hence significantly drawing works of visual art into a text that operates on a different plane. Dedications may, or may not, have intertextual significance depending upon individual reading contexts and reading. Even though White denies that *The Vivisector* is based on Nolan, or indeed on any *one* particular artist, he did ask that Nolan read it before he published it:

> I should like you to read it to see how close or remote I am from the workings of a painter's mind. I should hate to find he is only a painter in a novel like most of the painters in fiction. I have also thought I'd like to dedicate the book to you, but you'd have to decide on reading it, as it will probably shock a lot of people, Australians in particular. (*Letters* 321)

Nolan's estate has a heavily marked copy of the work showing where Nolan thought that White was referring to him (*PW* 475). Such an edition might make an interesting marketing venture for a publisher, but Nolan's marks would still not be evidence of any truth behind White's text, they would merely be another form of intertextuality.

The dedication of a painting, however, is different to that of a written work. For someone to be given a visual work, especially if that gift is the first berth at which the work rests after its production, means that there is a necessary degree to which that work can be affected by the history associated with its owner/s. I refer to this effect as the owner-function. The owner-function also works if a painting is bought, but differs from the function at work when an art-works is the gift of an artist to an individual or a group of people. Giving a painting to someone parallels the dedication-function in a work of written art. While dedicatees of written works neither own the work dedicated to them (because it cannot be owned), nor do they own copyright over the work because of the work's dedicatory inscription, the public assumes that there will be some sort of understanding associated with that work, that will be the sole possession

of the dedicatee. No one else can purchase that position, or that experiential knowledge because the dedication is a gift. The experiential tie with the author of the work or the subject matter of the work, it is assumed, can only have been lived by the dedicatee/s. Likewise, the experience of being given a work of visual art can not (usually) be bought.[6]

To return to written epigraphs, though, after the title page, the list of an author's other works, the frontispiece, the publication details, and the dedication page, there may be a page on which are one or more significant references to works by other artists. These quotations are most often accompanied by their creator's name, but not usually by the title of the work from which they are taken. Because epigraphs do not usually have exact scholarly references, they can emit poetic textual resonances that enable readers to sense an intermingling of all texts. There is readerly freedom to follow an epigraph, or not. Epigraphs act as mysterious texts. Their authors are known, but their exact textual address is not supplied. We know another text has been used, but has an epigraph been *taken* from another text, or *borrowed*, or would it be more appropriate to say that it has been *copied* or *transcribed*? Whatever has happened, epigraphs no longer reside solely within the confines of the texts in which they were first published, and their appropriation by an epigrapher destabilises the "new" texts in which they appear, and the texts in which they were first published.

Words used as epigraphs inhabit the spaces of at least two different material texts, more if they have been quoted in other textual contexts. They also occupy the virtual spaces of innumerable readers. I suggest a modified Venn diagram that is one way of describing the epigraph's relationship to the new work (into which it has been transcribed). In diagram 4, circle A (representing a new work) overlaps with circle B (which represents the work from which the epigraph is taken). This overlapping can mean that anywhere from around twenty to eighty percent of each work is affected by the epigraph's resonance, with the same percentage of both texts not being affected in any significant way by the epigraph. In diagram 4, I have positioned alley-ways from each larger circle into the shared area of intertextuality, (and also into the arena of intertexts outside these two texts). These alley-ways signify the ways in which any

reader can wilfully engage in acts of intertextual reading, or choose not to. As well as the intertextuality that occurs on all textual levels, however, I have also positioned a linking doorway labelled "e" inside the shared intertextual area. This doorway represents the text of the epigraph which now exists as a part of both (inter)texts. The author function of the epigraphic text is important because an epigraph functions differently if its author is not cited. The author's name confirms that the small textual sample is not (usually) by the same author writing the body of the "new" text (circle A). Non-epigraphic intertexts operate primarily because their textual attributes are

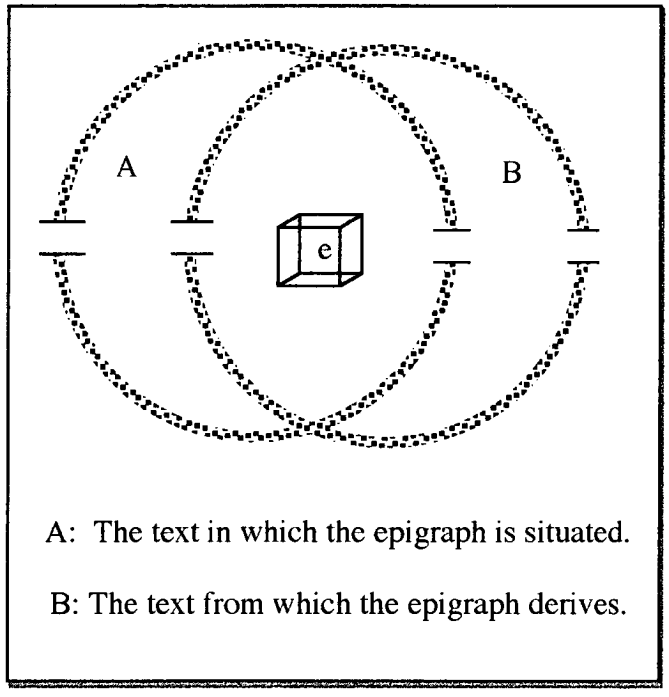


diagram 4

apparent in a "new" text, not because their author is known. The epigraph has a role as a connecting passage-way between the "new" text and the text from which the epigraph is taken. This specific intertextuality would not exist if the epigraph did not exist. A reader might perceive the connection between the two works if the epigraph did not exist to signify that intertextuality, but textually that intertextuality would not be the same. The small, but pivotal intertextually-linking tunnel of the actual epigraphic text would be missing, and whatever intertextuality was read into the works would tend to be more reader-initiated, unless there were significant intertextual links elsewhere in the two material texts.

Riders in the Chariot, for instance, has an epigraph from Blake which intertexts with both the book of Ezekiel and with much of the text of *Riders in the Chariot*. Without the epigraph, there are significant intertextual resonances between *Riders in the Chariot* and the book of Ezekiel (which also intratexts with other works in White's *oeuvre*).[7] The epigraph, however, serves to enforce these intertextual readings, and to complicate them. Like the impossible scenarios presented in Escher drawings, the epigraphic tunnel in diagram 4 is an illusion. It represents a link between two works that, even though they can be linked by readerly intertextuality, are now formally connected by the epigraph. The doorway is, if you like, a hoax. Its actuality can only take place in virtual readerly space. All acts of intertextuality are equally as illusory. Their existence cannot be proved to (or imposed upon) anyone for whom they are meaningless. And often, for the reader for whom the doorway operates, explaining how that process occurs can be like trying to map the intricate motion of thought.

Even though it is now accepted that readers and viewers of art create their own texts (or intertextual readings) as they read, that freedom is not entirely open-ended. Readers are usually constrained to some extent by the material text being read. If an epigraph, or some epigraphs, have been placed at the beginning of a work (and not half-way through, or at the end), the meaning of those epigraphs is partly determined by readers' understandings as to why the epigraphs have been so situated; and is also affected by their understanding of the epigraphic words, and their original context/s. The small central doorway in diagram 4 operates as a textual locking device, that permits the two larger circles to be drawn as permanently overlapping, and not overlapping merely because a reader or several readers perceive intertextuality to be evident in the works. If readers have no knowledge of the epigraphic text, or its various contexts, however, the epigraph, and the text from which it was taken, cannot, for those readers, affect the text to any great degree. Those readers merely know that there is a wider context in which the work has been situated, and that the wider context is available to them if they choose to investigate the text from which the epigraph was taken. Some theorists might argue that the words of the epigraph are the only words

that ought to be taken into account when reading a new text. But it is very difficult not to import the remainder of an epigraphic text when a little (but often pivotal) portion of that text has been deliberately placed in the entrance way of a new book. If the little is relevant, and has been so chosen, it is likely that at least some of the remainder of the epigraphic text will relate in some way to the new work. It is also possible that the epigraph's intertexts will also affect acts of intertextual reading.

Descriptions of the word "epigraph" are relatively limited. Greene has suggested that an epigraph signifies what a work is about. I have suggested that epigraphs are traditional and formal invitations for readers to participate in reading intertextually. The description offered in Cuddon's *Dictionary of Literary Terms* is:

> (a) an inscription on a statue, stone or building; (b) the writing (legend) on a coin; (c) a quotation on the title page of a book; (d) a motto heading a new section or paragraph. (Cuddon 296)

Jan Zelenak points out that very little had been written about the epigraph as a literary device (by 1977), arguing that the term itself is unstable: "[t]oday we are not sure whether we should use the term 'epigraph,' 'motto' or simply 'inscription' for a quotation preceding a literary work. Most of the modern encyclopedias in English omit any extensive reference to the term altogether" (1). Etymologically, the word "epigraph" derives from the same stem as "epigram" and therefore there is a sense in which the "epigraph" is intended to be witty or to have some epigrammatic function. In the nineteenth century it was thought that an epigraph needed to be a quotation by a well known classical author, and that it ought to "express the spirit of the work or, at least, the essence of some of the thoughts of the author employing the epigraph ... [and that] it ought to be brief, concise and to the point" (Zelenak 4).

The current trend is to take epigraphs from anywhere and everywhere. Postmodernist producers of text delight in conflating time and meaning via the devices of revision and appropriation. While it is usual to include an author's name with an epigraph, it is not necessary. Author's names are not always been provided, and, if detailed, they are not always truthful.[8] Viktor Shlovsky alleges that:

> Pushkin invented some of his "quotations." For example, Pushkin himself wrote the epigraph to Chapter 9 in *Captain's Daughter* even though he identified it as an excerpt from Sumarokov. (The invention of epigraphic "quotations" would

> become a fashionable trend toward the end of the 19th century). (Zelenak 8)

The epigraph has always been an arena for play, an area of literature that has often aroused critics to ask what was the author's intention in placing epigraphs in a work. David Lavery writes that an author may be able to achieve insights with an epigraph "which could be come upon in no other way:"

> [w]hen Susan Griffin, in *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*, juxtaposes – at the top of a section on "Territory' (dealing with the conquering of the "virgin land" of the American continent) – quotations from the inventor of the speculum, a patristic theologian, and Sir Walter Raleigh, the reader is struck by the pattern of sexism – the ubiquitous metaphor of the world of knowledge as a virgin female in medicine, theology, geography – revealed in their meeting. (Lavery 16)

Griffin's careful choice of epigraphs enables a sort of poetic technique to be adopted so that readers, understanding the generic process of epigraphic play, will allow textual leaps in time and space to exist and have meaning. The function of an epigraph's author can be especially important in revisionist works, such as the feminist work by Griffin, and/or when irony is intended. Lavery suggests that there may be a trend towards epigraphs in which authors *quote* from their own works (as opposed to completely inventing epigraphs as did Pushkin) (17). It no longer seems that any textual genre, medium, or style is denied to the epigrapher, who is constrained only by means and imagination. This work has included some images as epigraphs to suggest that the textual medium of an epigraph need not necessarily be words.[9] To quote from an artist's visual repertoire is not often considered by people selecting epigraphs, but there is no reason, apart from the perceived difficulty of reproduction, not to use a visual epigraph to precede any sort of work that might benefit from an epigraph.

The cover illustrations of novels can have an important epigraphic function, even if that function was not intended by their authors. The creator of an artist's book is well aware of the overall sign comprised by the totality of a book, and certainly many writers have wished to be involved in the selection of cover illustrations for their works. Traditionally, however, publishers have thwarted these desires, and/or have baulked at the cost of providing the illustrations chosen by authors.[10] White's desire to "cover" his novels in works of visual art can be read as more than mere caprice. He

wanted, with Rimbaud, to invent new languages that would transgress the boundaries of textual medium.[11] White would have enjoyed collaborating with publishers on illustrated editions of his novels. Whether or not he could ever have decided upon which works to use is another question. As it is, by influencing his publishers' choices of cover-illustrations, by using epigraphs, dedications, an by making the body of his texts include many invitations to read intertextually, White's works are particularly resonant with intertextual dimensions.

If visual images can be used as epigraphs for written works, then, do visual artists utilise epigraphs? – and, if so, how? Many artists incorporate written texts into their works, and many artists refer visually to other artistic texts. Metaphorically, however, a book is constructed in such a way as to allow for its readers to enter its hall-way via a door (the title), where they are greeted, if you like, by one or more epigraphs which herald the content of the work that is to follow. Any epigraphic function of the book's cover might be thought of as a gateway to the grounds of the house. This metaphor can be used and extended almost endlessly. (The publisher might be the co-owner/ decorator of the grounds and the house, whose advice can only be acted upon with the full agreement of the writer/copyright property-owner.) With a two-dimensional visual work of art, however, viewers are usually able to enter via a doorway-title, even if it is in the form of *Untitled*, but an epigraph has no physical place to reside within the frame-work of a two-dimensional work of art. Some painters use captions as adjuncts to the titles of their works, and these can read as epigraphs. The title itself can have an epigraphic function, and I discuss this in the next sub-section, *scribbling on art/ a myriad threads*. The name of a particular exhibition might operate as an epigraph for a time. An exhibition catalogue, with its book format, may contain one or more epigraphs in various media. But if a painter wants to refer epigraphically to another artist within the framework of a single work, that reference is usually assumed to be part of the body of the new work of art, to be one of the ways in which the work has been "traversed with otherness" (Barbara Johnson 116). On a painting, the epigraph has no culturally agreed place from which to affect work, and yet to sit ambiguously, now a visitor, now an inhabitant, of the work.

Figure 65 – [unhelmeted framed] *Ned Kelly*, 1946, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 74.5 x 61.5 cm, ANG, page 74 of *SNLL*.

Figure 66 – *Barrett Reid*, 1947, ripolin enamel on pulpboard, 74.5 x 62.5 cm, QAG, page 68 of *SNLL*.

Because visual works of art do not have a long tradition of a device such as an epigraph, there is no provision for artists to subvert, revise, and/or deliberately draw in other works in an epigraphic way. The frame is probably the only entity that could rival cover and epigraph as a device with which visual artists can, and do, play. Nolan uses the device of the frame to link his portraits of the [unhelmeted framed] *Ned Kelly*, 1946 (fig. 65), and *Barrett Reid*, 1947 (fig. 66), with the famous framed photograph of Rimbaud (fig. 67). A similar framing device is used in his depiction of Eliza Fraser as a Nebuchadnezzar-like naked animal in *Mrs Fraser*, 1947 (fig. 68). The effect is to subvert the expectation of a pretty picture within an oval frame that might sit on a mantle-piece: instead what we see is a naked, demeaned creature. The oval shape, while signifying "frame" also suggests the tunnel of a telescope, causing viewers to become knowing voyeurs. The "frame" also acts as the barrel of a gun, creating an unsettling placement of viewers in the position of training a gun on a naked animal-like woman. Intertexting this idea with the Kelly and Barrett portraits, the two young men become targets at the end of a gun barrel. No longer is it only Ned Kelly and the police who are involved in violence, it is also viewers. Kelly's head seems to be particularly vulnerable as he is unprotected by his helmet.[12] On Kelly's police record are two images of the man: one as a young man similar to that in [unhelmeted framed] *Ned Kelly*, 1946 (fig. 65), and the other like the bearded man shown unhelmeted in *Kelly and Scanlan*, 1945 (fig. 69). In *Kelly and Scanlan*, 1945, the policeman's gun is free-floating, but trained on Kelly's unhelmeted head. Kelly has blue-sky in the white of one of his eyes, so that he is both present and absent (as in the helmeted images of him where the visor of his mask is depicted as full of landscape rather than his body [figs. 40 & 46]).

In *Return to Glenrowan*, 1946 (fig. 70), the Kelly-helmet reads as signifying *frame*, visual epigraph, and textual space. As visual epigraph the helmet refers viewers to other Kelly images, their metaphoric associations, and/or the historiographic text about Ned Kelly. Viewers can become Kelly looking out of the mask and seeing the approaching policeman. The mask becomes not a mirror of ourselves, but a subjective space into which we might enter, and perceive its imagined

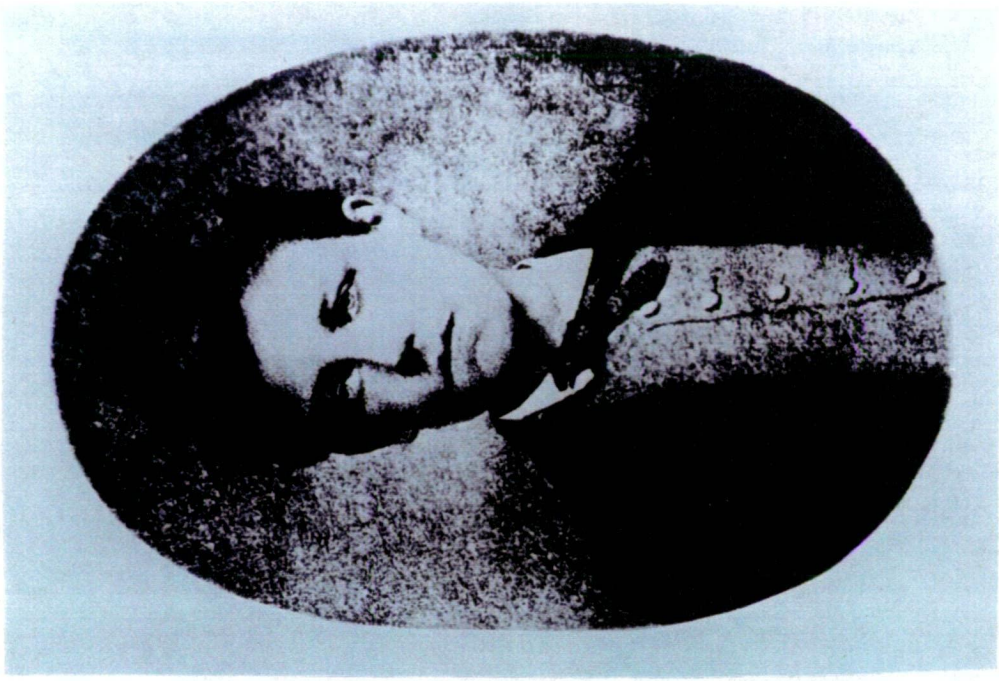


Figure 67 – Carjat, Rimbaud photographed in 1871, photograph: State Library of Victoria, page 38 of *SNLL*.

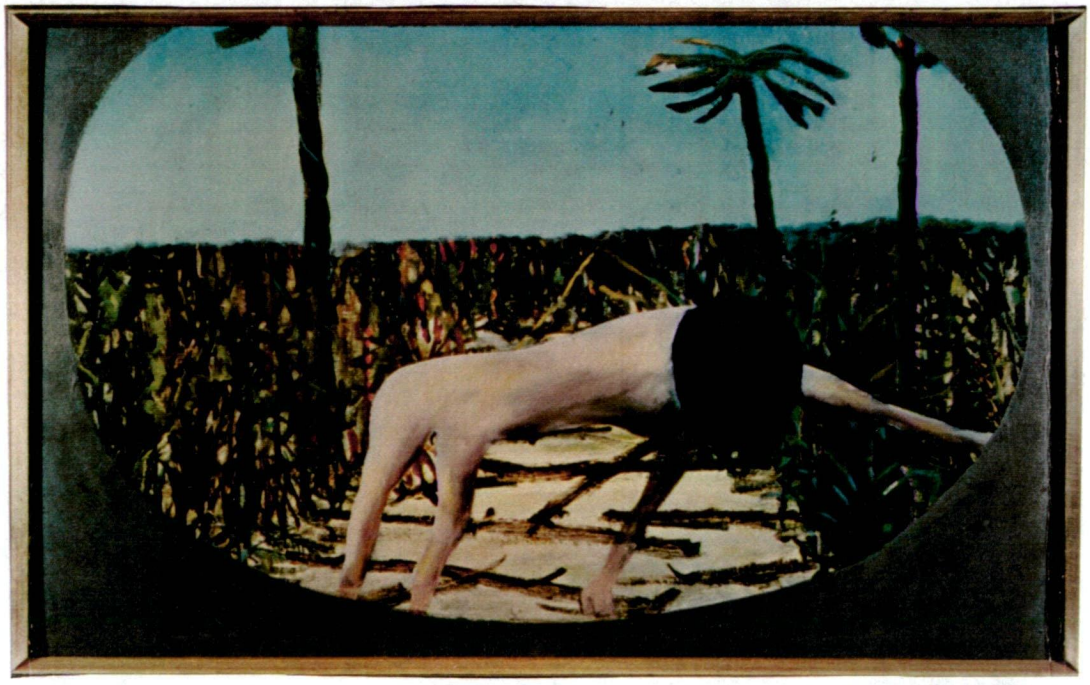


Figure 68 – *Mrs Fraser*, 1947, ripolin enamel on hardboard, 66.2 x 107 cm, page 91 of *SNLL*.

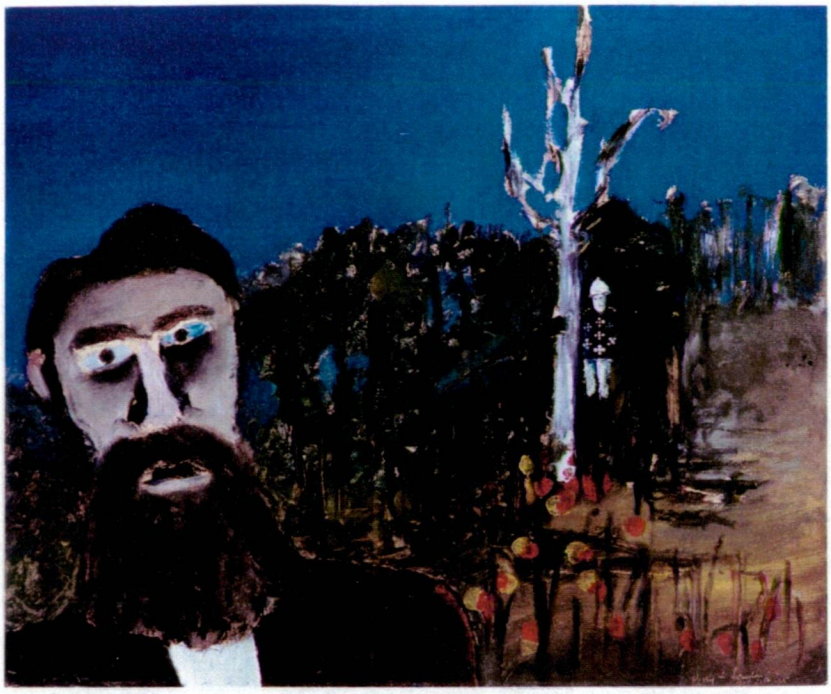


Figure 69 – [unhelmeted] *Kelly and Scanlan*, 1946, ripolin on strawboard, 73.4 x 76.1 cm, Nolan Gallery, Lanyon, page 15 of *NL*.

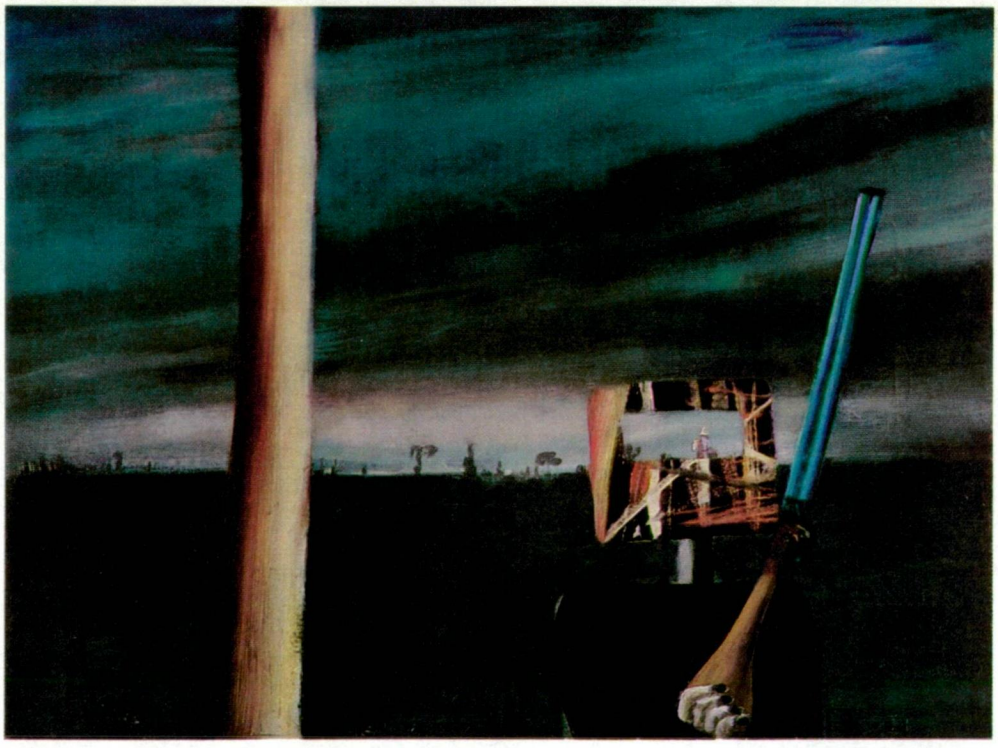


Figure 70 – *Return to Glenrowan*, 1946, ripolin on board, 91.9 x 122.3 cm, Lanyon, Nolan Gallery, page 25 of *NL*.

actuality, seeing as Kelly saw; not only as the historical Kelly, but as the metaphorical "any outsider" (that Kelly can represent). The Kelly-helmet becomes a framing device itself, often framing smaller pictures within the larger image (figs. 40, 46, 70). Kelly's rectangular head also becomes the image of the conventions in this society of rectangular painting boards, television sets, cinema screens, and the dimensions of both page and book. Reading the rectangular helmet in this way, widens the range of intertextual reading possibilities for Nolan's Kelly images.

Nolan simulates an actual picture-frame in *Moby Dick*, 1940 (fig. 64) in order to situate written text outside, and yet still within this work. He may have been attempting to establish an epigraph-function when he placed written text taken from Melville's *Moby Dick* outside a frame drawn by himself around the actual illustration of the whale impaling itself on three masts. Whether or not it was intentional, however, the inner "fictional" frame creates an illusion of movement from "outside" the work into the actual realm of the work itself. In this case, the written text is so closely allied with the work of art rendered as to make the visual work more like a visual translation, a reverse ekphrasis, of its "epigraph." The physical format of the art-work, however, could easily enable an epigraph-function, in either written or visual form, to be presented outside the fictional frame. Such epigraphs might herald more completely innovative epigraphic works of art.

Outside the delineated frame of *Moby Dick*, 1940 (fig. 64) Nolan has written: "the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three dismantled masts alone visible, and an exasperated whale purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself on the three mastheads."[13] These words run below the frame, and on its left-hand-side is written "Moby Dick, Page 15, 1940." The work is a self-conscious act of reverse ekphrasis that refuses to take itself too seriously. The description of the oil painting in "The Spouter-Inn," that precedes the lines Nolan has selected, is slightly more than the length of one page. Nolan's variation on an act of reverse ekphrasis is performed in pen and wash, deliberately evading, from the outset, any attempt at exact replication of the fictional oil painting. The work described in Melville's *Moby Dick* is:

> a very large oil-painting so thoroughly be-smoked, and every way defaced, that in the unequal cross-lights by which you viewed it, it was only by diligent study and a series of systematic visits to it, and careful inquiry of the neighbours, that you could any way arrive at an understanding of its purpose. (Melville 103)

Nolan would also, undoubtedly, have been attracted to the ironic tone of the narrative voice:

> [there were] unaccountable masses of shades and shadows, that at first you almost thought some ambitious young artist, in the time of the New England hags, had endeavoured to delineate chaos bewitched. But by dint of much and earnest contemplation and oft repeated ponderings, and especially by throwing open the little window towards the back of the entry, you at last come to the conclusion that such an idea, however wild, might not be altogether unwarranted. (103)

The irony is obvious. Just when readers think the work is going to be revealed as the work of a master, the narrator concludes that it might well be the work of "an ambitious young artist" (103). Nolan subverts the narrative by making his fish white and clearly visible, whereas the text of Melville's book suggests that the "mass" that is finally decided to be a whale is:

> a long, limber, portentous, black mass of something hovering in the centre of the picture ... A boggy, soggy, squitchy picture truly, enough to drive a nervous man distracted ... Ever and anon a bright, but alas, deceptive idea would dart you through. – It's the Black Sea in a midnight gale. – It's the unnatural combat of four primal elements. – It's a blasted heath ... – It's the breaking-up of the ice-bound stream of Time. But at last all these fancies yielded to that one portentous something in the picture's midst. *That* once found out, and all the rest were plain. But stop; does it not bear a faint resemblance to a gigantic fish? even the great leviathan himself? (103-4) [14]

Melville's irony continues and is complemented by Nolan's own wit. The "theory" of Melville's narrator, which is actually made of an accumulation of his own theories, and those of several others, is the phrase chosen by Nolan to accompany his illustration:

> [i]n fact, the artist's design seemed this: a final theory of my own, partly based upon the aggregated opinions of many aged persons with whom I conversed upon the subject. The picture represents a Cape-Horner in a great hurricane; *the half-foundered ship weltering there with its three dismantled masts alone visible, and an exasperated whale purposing to spring clean over the craft, is in the enormous act of impaling himself on the three mastheads.*(104 [emphasis added])

And so, Nolan has translated Melville's words into a visual form, but a form that encapsulates both the "oil picture" described, the spirit of "tall tale" in which the entire

episode is presented, and the "theory" of Melville's narrator, Ishmael. This variation of a reverse ekphrasis is also a striking example of intertextuality; and in Nolan vocabulary, it is also an early example of his use of levitation, irony, and intertextuality with literature and mythology.

Nolan played with the enmeshment of writing and images in many of his works. His chief involvement in visual epigraphs, however, was in the large number of cover-illustrations that he provided for writers, mostly his friends. Examining the cover-illustrations made by Nolan for White's works is a point of tangible intertextuality. The liaison ostensibly began when White asked Nolan to provide an illustration for the cover of *Voss*, although Marr reports that White had been an admirer of Nolan's work for years before this (*Letters* 112). Their relationship was such that each artist encouraged the other, and they also influenced one another's work. White was instrumental in changing the name of the painting *The Galaxy*, 1957-58 (fig. 7), and White also inspired Nolan to paint his series of "ladies" based on women in White's fiction (*Letters* 259). Other obvious artistic interplay includes: the illustrations by Nolan (figs. 184 & 185) which *Australian Letters* published with White's "The Woman Who Wasn't Allowed to Keep Cats;" dust-jacket illustrations for *Voss* (fig. 3), *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 90), and *Riders in the Chariot* (fig. 82), which were commissioned by E&S; paintings and drawings by Nolan which were used for re-prints of the E&S *The Living and the Dead* (fig. 92) and *The Burnt Ones* (fig. 89) and Penguin editions of *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 22), *The Tree of Man* (fig. 76), *Riders in the Chariot* (fig. 86), and *A Fringe of Leaves* (fig. 151); and the Jonathan Cape first edition of *A Fringe of Leaves* (fig. 149). Adams writes,

> [w]hen ...[Nolan] returned to London after a sojourn in Rome to fulfil obligations to the Italian Government scholarship, Nolan received a manuscript from the Australian writer Patrick White of his novel *Voss* with an accompanying letter asking if Nolan would design the dust jacket, because as an art lover White felt Nolan had explored the interior of the Australian continent in a physical sense, while he through his story of the explorer, Voss, investigated it mentally. Nolan read the manuscript and was impressed with the narrative and White's command of language. Nolan felt his jacket artwork was a strangely unsuitable design, but it was the beginning of a long association with the writer. (*SNSIL* 134 [fig. 3])

Even though Nolan's illustration for the dust-jacket of *Voss* was a disappointment to both White and Nolan, it occupies an important place in Australian literary history. *Voss* does not have a verbal epigraph, arguably making the cover a visual epigraph. The cover illustration of *Voss*, as a visual epigraph, serves to invite readers of novel to draw upon Nolan's *oeuvre* and intertext those works with White's writing. If Finley's cover illustration for the E&S *The Tree of Man* (fig. 74) is the equivalent of Australian naturalistic writing, Nolan's images read as mimicking White's writing; or perhaps it was White's language that emulated Nolan's art. The stuff of which their art was made was as important to both men as what those signifiers might attempt to convey. Alan Lawson argues that:

> White's first published story ... "The Twitching Colonel' ... has as one of its thematic centres the need to get beyond the immediate but it registers this in a language that constantly draws attention to its own materiality. Most immediately, one notices the mannerisms of style that insist upon its formal existence *as language* other than as a transparent medium through which "reality" appears untouched. (Lawson xvi-xvii)

Both White and Nolan wanted their artistic efforts to convey sensuality, surface and play, not unbridled intellectualism. The degree of ekphrasis, reverse ekphrasis, epigraphic, and intertextual associations involved in both men's works means that slippages between Nolan-text and White-text occur frequently if readers are open to reading intertextually. The visual epigraphs provided by Nolan in his cover illustrations for White's books, even though they were not always exactly what White might have desired, act as door-ways through which readers might more readily enmesh the (inter)textual terrains of two *oeuvres* constructed in different material textual media, but which are both inter-resonant.

Tarred and Feathered, 1945 (fig. 57).

the map of our tracks is a skein
on the sand. We cover the same ground

and come away from different places
Sarah Day

scribbling on art/ a myriad threads

Nolan's titles, and any words written on the bodies of his paintings, are most often linked in some way. It is as though the title has refused to stay within its boundaries, and has spilled over onto the canvas. Even though many of Nolan's titles post-date the productions of his art-works, once works of art are complete, the dictates of chronology need not reign over reading practice. Nolan's *Le désespoir à des ailes* (*Despair has wings*), 1943 (fig. 71) is inscribed on the lower left hand-side of the work, across one of the embracing figures:

> *Le désespoir à des ailes,*
> *L'amour a pour ailes nacré*
> *Le désespoir*
> *Les societés peuvent changer*
> Pierre Jean-Jouve
> N. 43

Nolan stated of *Le désespoir à des ailes (Despair has wings)*, 1943 in 1978:

> [y]ou see, I didn't write on the Kellys but used captions, but early I wrote on paintings and later wrote a lot on the Ern Malley drawings of 1974 ... actual poems. Here I have: "Despair has wings shining like nacreous pearls." You can see

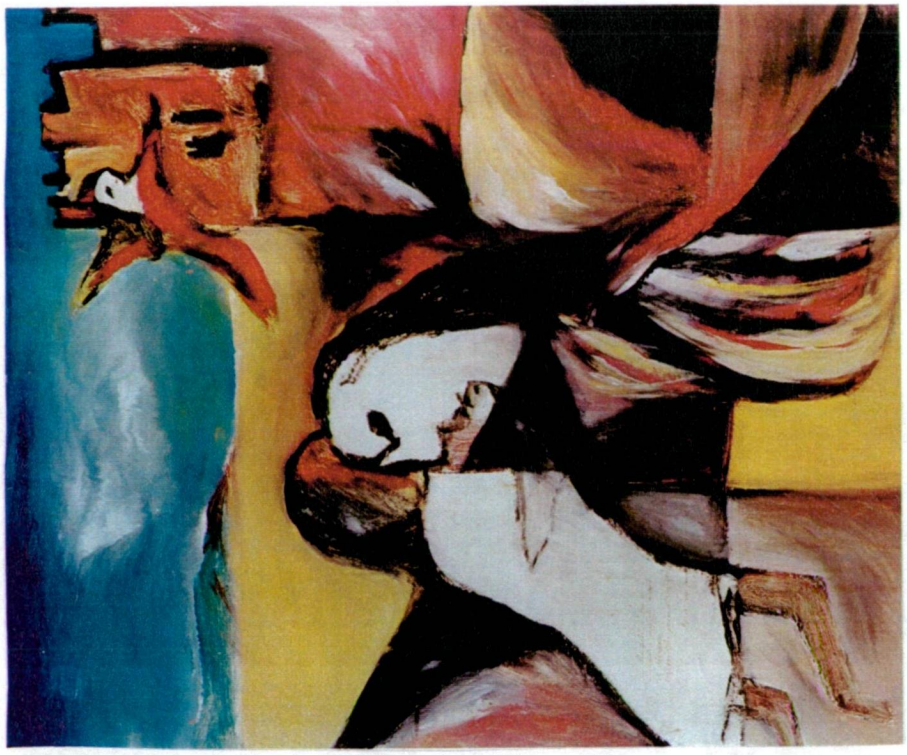


Figure 71 – *Le désespoir à des ailes (Despair has wings)*, 1943, ripolin enamel on pulpboard, 75.5 x 63.5 cm, Heide, page 55 of *SNLL*.

Figure 72 – *Arabian Tree*, 1943, ripolin enamel on three-layer plywood, 91.5 x 61 cm, page 56 of *SNLL*.

> why I liked lines in the Ern Malley poems, which were really only fraudulent in their stated origin.(*SNA* 41)

Nolan clearly sees writing directly onto paintings, and the use of captions, as different artistic devices. It can be argued that the words written onto the pink embracing figure act as epigraph because they have been lifted from another work, and have then been drawn into the painting. But, in this instance, the epigraph function seems not to be as strong as the ekphrastic function of the inscription. The image is more directly a translation of the Jouve poem, rather than a spring-board from which to move into innovation, parallelism, revision, appropriation, ambiguity, irony, and whatever other reading practices are invited by epigraphic play.

The title-function is an important aspect of intertextuality, as titles of paintings and books may link with other works of art. *Camel and Figure*, 1962 (fig. 136) was initially called "Burke," Nolan indicated to Jane Clark that he preferred the "generalised title *Camel and Figure*, suggesting a universal emotion rather than incidental details of history' (*SNLL* 135). Many of Nolan's works shift significantly with the various titles that have been used for different exhibitions. Because books are often long, and their textual medium is the same as that of the title, it may seem that their titles are not as important as the titles of painted works in which the title-function is foregrounded by existing in a different textual medium. Nolan's title *Moby Dick*, 1940 for instance, is deliberately intertextual. It draws in Melville's novel, as well as other texts that intertext with Melville's *Moby Dick*. The title of the book, however, does not have as many connotations because it is not an epigraphic title, and could conceivably be replaced by another.

The Tree of Man also operates as an epigraph, but because of its title-function, the epigraphic aspect of the words are lessened. We know that White took the title from an A.E. Housman poem, but because this fact and Housman's name are type-set to appear underneath the publishing details, the announcement operates more as a legal requirement than an artistic device. For the full epigraphic implications of the intertextuality to take place, the words would also need to be placed on a page of epigraphs. In fact, the novel has no official epigraph. The work began as a manuscript

entitled *A Life Sentence On Earth* (*PW* 282). White later changed the title to the line from the Housman poem, but wrote to Huebsch:

> I wonder whether sufficient people will know the source of the title, or whether some may even think I have pinched the poem and kept quiet. I could not very well write in the text: "Thelma Forsdyke then sat down and read the following poem by A. E. Housman." So perhaps we should acknowledge it somewhere on the jacket when the book comes out.(*Letters* 95-96)

The distinction between the epigraphic and the title-function is demonstrated here by White's comment. White felt the need to alert readers to the source of the novel's title because he did not trust readers to be sufficiently well read to know, and if they did recognise the connection, he wanted to let them know that the intertextual association was a deliberate one. Another solution would be to use the words of the title (and their context) as an epigraph on a separate epigraph page. Perhaps this might have seemed repetitive.

In the case of Nolan's scribbling on *Tarred and Feathered*, 1945 (fig. 57), the scribbling is almost entirely nebulous in its signifying possibilities. It is representative of the act of scribbling/writing, rather than attempting to denote particular words with particular meanings. Titles, cover illustrations, frontispieces, epigraphs that preface an entire work, chapter headings, and chapter epigraphs, are all genres that belong to lengthy traditions. Playing with intertextuality when using these devices is invited, desired, and expected. When artists use intertextual references as part of the body of their work (rather than as part of the title, frame, epigraph, cover, or other physical aspect of their work), however, that intertextuality is free, theoretically, from the constraints of genre and device. The free-play of reading, writing, and painting intertextually is metaphorised in Nolan's scribbling on *Tarred and Feathered*, 1945 (fig. 57). At this time, the boundaries of textual ownership are being taken to their limits. Writerly, painterly, and photocopy-artists' palettes are being broadened to their widest capacity. Many artists esteem plagiarism as a new ground-breaking artistic practice, one that calls into question language and art, and the copyright laws governing both entities. Legal systems, however, still operate to prevent rampant plagiarism, and to maintain an awareness of the debates surrounding textual ownership.

Away from the disputed site of plagiarism, though, lies the intertextuality at work and play between the art of White and Nolan. This play is only ever potential, however, until readers participate in acts of reading intertextually. Nolan's *The Secret Life of Birds*, 1940 (fig. 58) is a collage of twigs, galah feathers, and string, which form the image of a galah sitting on a branch. Nolan has written in pencil on the lower left-hand side of the work:

> Secret life of birds
> marked in the soft Barcoo,
> crying for a bright pain
> folded in the child air.

White's short story, "The Cockatoos," involves a young boy killing a native Australian bird, not a galah, but a cockatoo. An intertextuality plays between the two works. The birds in the story have a *secret life*. None of the people in the area quite know where the birds will appear next. The birds bring pleasure to many, but disturb others because they pick at the bark on various trees. After Figgis loses control, shoots at the cockatoos, and then kills Davoren, Tim Goodenough, who has just turned nine, kills a cockatoo:

> Tim Goodenough made the noises his mother produced for age and sickness, for the "poor old cockie," when suddenly and unexpectedly, desire spurted in him. He jumped high enough to swing on and bring down a small bough. After a bit of a wrestling match, he succeeded in twisting it free.
>
> All the time the cockatoo was eyeing him, beak half open, one wing trailing.
>
> There was no need to pretend: the bird might have been offering himself.
>
> The boy looked round before swinging. The bird squeaked once, less in fear or pain, it seemed, than because it was expected of him, and huddled himself against the grass.
>
> Tim hit and hit. It was soon over ... (303)

"[C]rying for a bright pain/ folded in the child air." This intertextuality operates in an imagic way, not necessarily adding anything to the "meanings" of either text. Both texts represent the transience of life, the propensity of children to inflict pain, and the innocence of both children and birds.

The death of White's bird intratexts with a bird that dies in a tree as a type of Christ in *The Eye of the Storm.* It is this bird's death that reminds Elizabeth of the storm's imminent return, and prevents her staying on the beach where she might have been killed:

> [s]he would lie down rather, [and die] ... Logically it should have happened. If some force not her absent will had not wrenched at her doll's head and faced it with the object skewered to the snapped branch of a tree. The gull, a homelier version of the white predators, had been reduced to a plaque in haphazard bones and sooty feathers. Its death would have remained unnoticed if her mind's ear had not heard the cry still tearing free as the breast was pierced.
>
> At least the death cry of the insignificant sooty gull gave her back her significance. (425)

The bird is referred to as "a plaque in haphazard bones and sooty feathers," which intertexts with Nolan's plaque on paper of haphazard twigs and feathers (fig. 58). Again there is a bird "crying for a bright pain." Because Elizabeth is both old dying child (senile, bed-wetting and infirm) and young child (senile wanderings bring her childhood memories) throughout the novel, and because there is a reference to her "doll's head," there is also the resonance of being "folded in the child air" (fig. 58). When Elizabeth finally dies, she relives the "eye" scene and rather than violence at the end, she says, "oh DON'T my dark birds of light let us rather - *enfold*" (551 [emphasis added]).

Nolan's *Arabian Tree*, 1943 (fig. 72), which appeared on the cover of *Angry Penguins*, Autumn 1944, depicts a man and a woman naked in a tree. Lush blue-greens pervade the picture, changing to yellow-greens here and there. The flesh tones of the man and the woman are carried across onto two rocks that sit below, and slightly to the right, of the figures in the tree. A smaller bush in the front left-hand-side of the frame might be a peacock with its tail in full display. The connection between the naked lovers and the tree of life in the Book of Genesis forms one intertextual link, but there is another that is both a more certain intertext and as uncertain as an intertext can be. The words inscribed by Nolan below the reddish flesh-coloured rocks in the most yellow-green, and therefore lightest place in the painting are taken from Ern Malley's "Petit Testament":

> I said to my love (who is living)
> Dear we shall never be that verb
> Perched on the sole Arabian Tree. (Heyward 261)

And on the lower left-hand side of the work in a shaded area next to the peacock is inscribed:

> Here the peacock blinks the eyes
> Of his multipennate tail. (Heyward 261)

Malley's poems are like sustained epigraphs, being collages of quotations, deliberate pastiches, albeit apparently tongue-in-cheek. The fact that their creation was the result of a hoax makes the poems weird chance intertextual meetings. Their beauty is the result of a bizarre accident – the pranksters were poets whose talent for poetic construction did not elude them when (perhaps) they most desired that it should. The hoax-tall-tale-element makes the poems, and Nolan's paintings of Ern Malley and his poetry, all the more peculiarly Australian.

Nolan's *Arabian Tree* invites imagining and dreaming. In a letter to Sunday Reed in 1943, Nolan described "the Arabian Tree with the two figures perched in it. Perched in a word like trembling when read in a poem; as verbs they have ... an explicit painterly instruction about them. All of Rilke's images are the same" (*SNLL* 56). The tree, then, as well as its other intertextual references also signifies "a word like trembling when read in a poem." And if we venture into the virtual intertextual world that can be created by reading Nolan and White, many intertextual links will become apparent. The tree, according to Nolan's intertextual reading of it, signifies "a word like trembling when read in a poem;" and the poem, parts of which are inscribed next to the tree, also says:

> (Here the Tree weeps gum tears
> Which are also real: I tell you
> These things are real). (Heyward 261)

The tears of the tree signify the leaves of some Australian gum trees. The tears of the Arabian Tree also refer back, however, not only to *The Phoenix and the Turtle* (the Shakespeare poem from which the Malley quotations were taken), but also to Othello's speech before he stabs himself:

> Then must you speak
> ... of one whose subdued eyes,
> Albeit unusèd to the melting mood,
> Drops tears as fast as the Arabian trees
> Their medicinal gum. (V.ii.339, 344-47) [15]

The notes to the Cambridge edition of *Othello* gloss these gum tears:

> The reference is to the myrrh tree and probably comes from a conflation of two passages in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia*, 12.14-15. In one of these we are told that "myrrh and the trees that yield it" are found "in many quarters of Arabia ... they sweat out of themselves a certain liquor called stact, which is very good myrrh;" and in another, describing a product called opobalsamum, the liquor "issueth out of the wound ... which ...

> commeth forth by small drops; and as it thus weepeth, the tears ought to be received in wool." (Sanders 185-86)

And so, not only are there tear-shaped gum leaves, but also a tree that bleeds gum that is also myrrh.

In *The Tree of Man* the trees that bleed gum tears are wattles:

> The wattles were in flower. Now their black trunks were less desolate, now that the sun shone through the tears of oozing gum. Amy Parker, walking beneath the froth of wattles, broke off pieces of transparent gum, stuck it in her mouth for its prettiness and promise, but the gum was nothing much, neither sweet nor particularly bitter, just insipid.(55)

And in *Voss*:

> They were riding ... when Judd reached over and grabbed something from the trunk of a tree.
> "There you are, Harry,' he said, and offered his closed, hairy hand. "There is a present for yer."
> He was putting into his own mouth a similar knot of gum, to demonstrate his faith in the token.(245)

The inter-relationship between words and images is potent, with the intertextuality at play being capable of radically transforming the significance of each textual media.

Of Rimbaud's collection of poems, *Illuminations*, Nick Osmond writes,

> the essence of the title [of Rimbaud's] *Illuminations* is that words are turning into pictures, or creating word-pictures so vivid as to seem visible. The sub-title "coloured plates" ... reinforces this declared intention of extending language into the field of the visual arts.(Osmond 39)

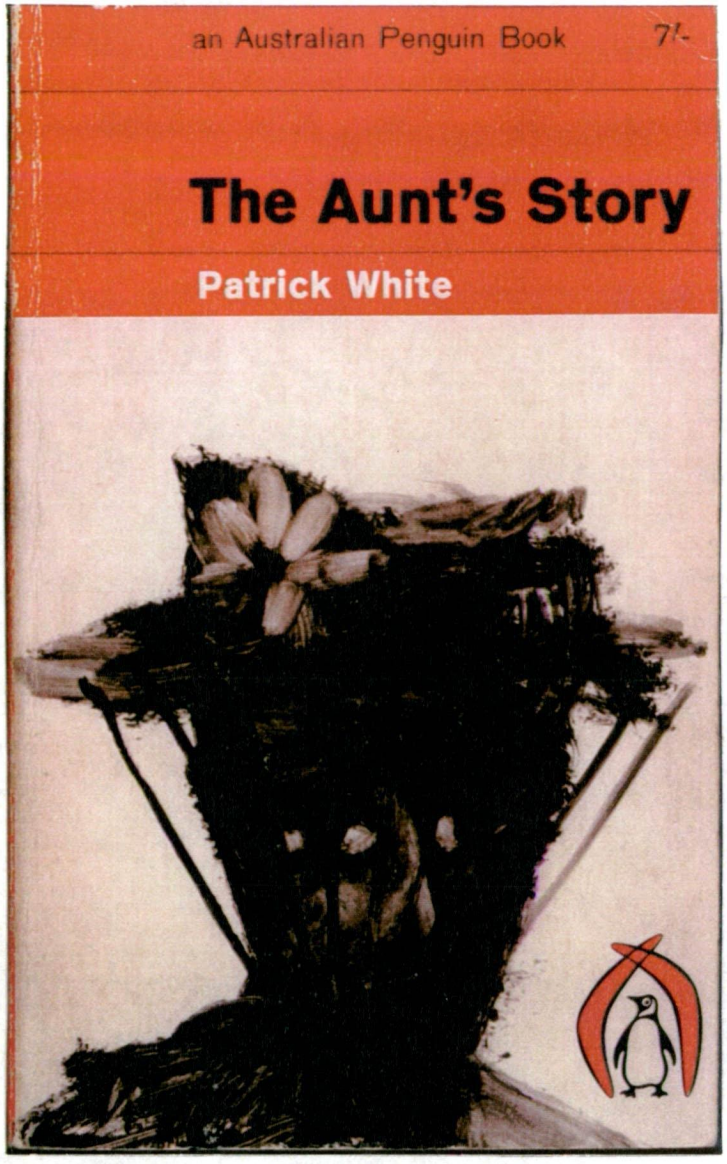
But, of course, in the realm of material text, writing cannot actually become image, unless visual art appropriate the letters and form of written text into its textual space, as in the images of Petr Herel, Jaspar Johns and René Magritte.[16] Attributes such as colour, tone, texture, and dimension may be recalled from a material visual text, but written text may also inspire readerly memories of colour, tone, texture, and dimension. In his book on ekphrasis, Murray Krieger writes that his book is to be

> a book about the picture-making capacity of words in poems, except that from the first that capacity was to be challenged by the obvious fact that words are many other things but are not – and happily are not – pictures and do not, even illusionarily, have "capacity." How can words try to do the job of the "natural sign" (i.e., a sign that is to be taken as a visual substitute for its referent), when they are, obviously, only arbitrary – though conventionally arbitrary – signs? (Krieger 2)

Once readers leave the physical presence of either visual art, or written words, however, the virtual (inter)textual collage with which they are left is mysterious and

changeable, no matter what collection of material signifiers prompted the fluctuating existence of the virtual (inter)textual collage. The verb "trembling" will never be the same after reading Nolan's comments about that word and how the tree in *Arabian Tree*, 1943 (fig. 72) is a verb, sometimes that verb, with lovers perched in it. ™trembling™ and ™*Arabian Tree*, 1943™ will always have a strange correlation for me. They will both signify something that exists as the result of reading intertextually. When the following passage from *Riders in the Chariot* is read intertextually, the signifier ™trembling™ continues its intertextual motion. Alf is experimenting with his new paints, and makes an image he calls *My Life:*

> [he] was moved to lay it at last upon the board in long, smooth tongues, which, he hoped, might convey his still rather nebulous intention. Sometimes he worked with the brushes he had prepared, more often with his *trembling* fingers (325 [emphasis added]).



Cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on inside front cover of *The Aunt's Story*, Penguin: Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1963 (fig. 22).

reading covers

Why have not cover illustrations moved more deftly into the hands of the people who write books? Why are covers not seen to be the visual epigraphs that they can be, and often are? Even though, historically, book covers have been largely controlled by publishers and marketing forces, writers often desire that there be artistic integrity in regard to the covers that enclose and herald their written works. Whenever authors have chosen their covers, there is often a degree of epigraphic intention attached to their choice. And whether or not there is epigraphic intention in covers, the illustration and wording with which a written work is presented can reveal many things about the ways in which a work is being represented, and the marketing strategies driving its

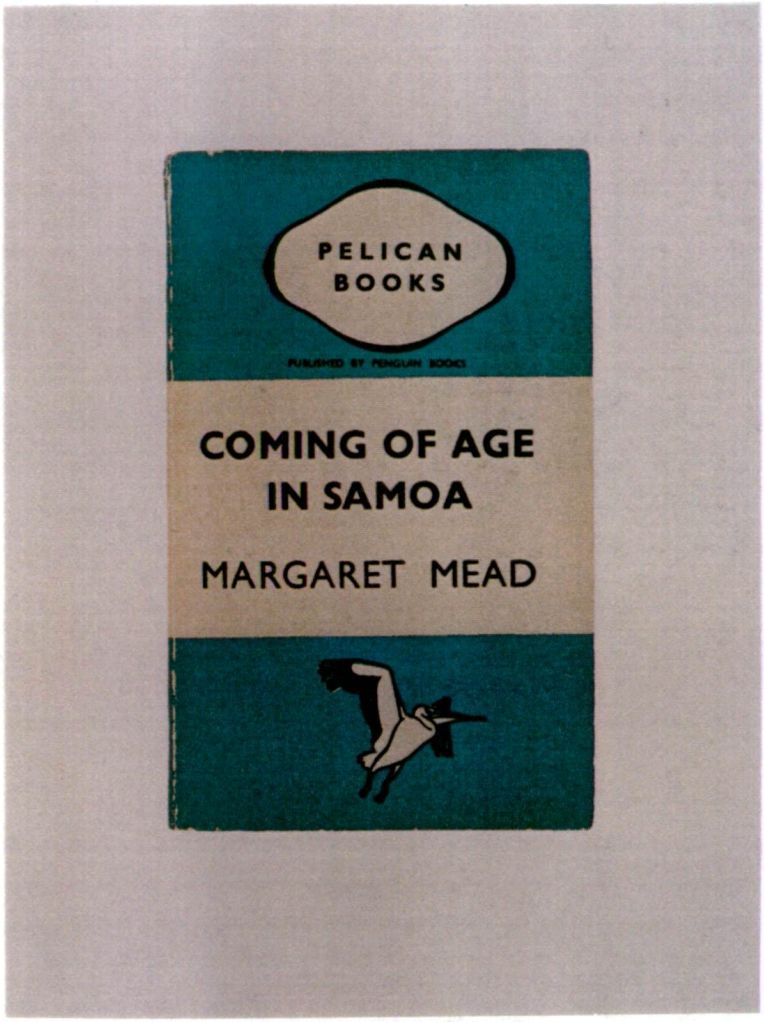


Figure 73 – R.B. Kitaj, *Coming of Age in Samoa* from the portfolio *In Our Time, Covers of a Small Library after the Life for the Most Part,* 1970, serigraph, printed in colour, sheet: 78.2 x 57.5 cm, MOMA, page 159 of Henry Geldzahler, ed., *Pop Art 1955-70*, International Cultural Corporation of Australia, 1985.

publishers.[17] Publishers today exploit covers to the utmost, trying to attract buyers rather than readers, or perhaps both. The Bloomsbury hard-cover editions of many classics with tastefully designed dust-jackets are part of a marketing strategy that has prompted many buyers to establish "tasteful," up-market libraries full of titles they might never have otherwise considered buying. The publisher's strategy supports a traditional canon of authors, appealing to the assumption by many people that there is a set canon of works that ought to be read.

Covers are often designed to reach markets that might not otherwise consider buying certain books. For example, when in 1981 America Playboy Paperback bought the paperback rights to Shirley Hazzard's *The Transit of Venus*, the book was marketed as a popular romance with "[a] conventionally attractive, long-haired girl ... balanced by the words 'An Almost Perfect Novel ...' from the *New York Times*, and a dark sunburst announcing 'Winner of the 1981 National Book Critics Circle Award'" (Bird 45). The cover used by Viking Press, however, for the initial hard-cover release of the work was "part of an American publishing culture that signals the release of an important work of literature by a jacket almost devoid of illustration" (Bird 40). The cover of the 1988 Picador edition of Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, a story about black slavery and oppression in the United States of America, was marketed as a conventional horror story, its title emblazoned in red and gold letters on a black cover. Toni Morrison's story *is* a horror story, but not of the genre convention its buyers might have been expecting by reading its cover. Up until the last decade or so, images used on the covers of books were not studied routinely as integral components of book culture. As we begin to read books in their entirety, as objects of history and material culture, however, the images used on the covers of books, and the history of those images is becoming more important. During the Pop Art movement of the 1960s and 1970s, with images such as *Coming of Age in Samoa* from the portfolio *In Our Time, Covers of a Small Library after the Life for the Most Part*, 1970 (fig. 73), artists such as Kitaj played with the ways in which books occupy different cultural and textual spaces: as book to be read, book to be displayed as artefact, book as product of a

consumer society, book as article of history (among other categories), book as art, and book-image as art.

White was very aware of the affect cover illustrations might have on his books. He was horrified by the cover Viking selected for *A Fringe of Leaves* and writes:

> [w]hat I don't like is the cluster of African huts and the ship standing practically on end on the back. Why won't you let me have plain lettering like any writer one respects? I don't believe many people buy books for awful jackets ... That jacket asks for a bad review. Why must you subject me to this indignity when others are allowed lettering? (*Letters* 487, 490)

White began writing at a time when publishers' concerns in marketing novelists' works were limited to differentiating literary novels from lesser forms of "popular" fiction. White took an interest in the covers of his novels mostly because his artistic sensibility was offended by Don Finley's illustration on the dust-jacket of the E&S edition of *The Tree of Man* (fig. 74). Alan Lawson points out that there was a myth about Australian writing (and by implication, about Australian art) pre-Patrick White. A.A. Philips declares that Australian writers were

> not only compelled to tell the truth as they see it ... they were forbidden to dress it up in any fripperies ... [there is a] naturalism which seems inherent in the Australian approach to fiction.(Philips 84)

The "laconic, stripped-down, emotionally-sparse work of Henry Lawson" and George Orwell's call for "a good plain English prose-style" combined to fuel this myth, according to Alan Seymour (Lawson xv-xvi). This myth seems to contradict the irony and textual play inherent in the other Australian tradition of the "tall-story." Seymour recalls, however, that into this climate of realism

> came Patrick White. I remember the impact as a reader myself ... [the works] were so different from what had gone before and what we were used to, and the difference was wrenching. (Lawson xv-xvi).

Finley's realistic cover illustration for *The Tree of Man*, however, had given no indication that there was something unusual lurking inside the book; readers might well have expected a "bush tale."

Even though White's objection to his publisher's choice of cover-illustration might seem to have been simply a matter of aesthetics, it is revealing to note Phillips's belief that there was a universal Australian taste for naturalism as the preferred national

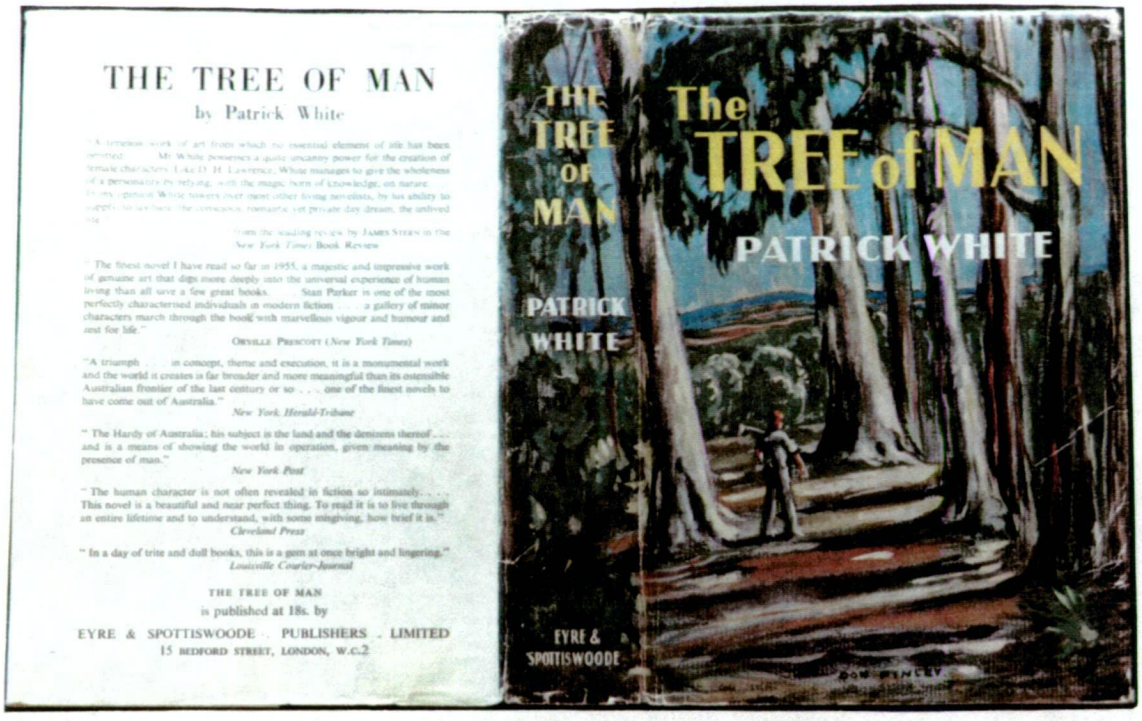


Figure 74 – Cover illustration by Don Finley credited on dust-jacket of *The Tree of Man*, London: E&S, 1956.

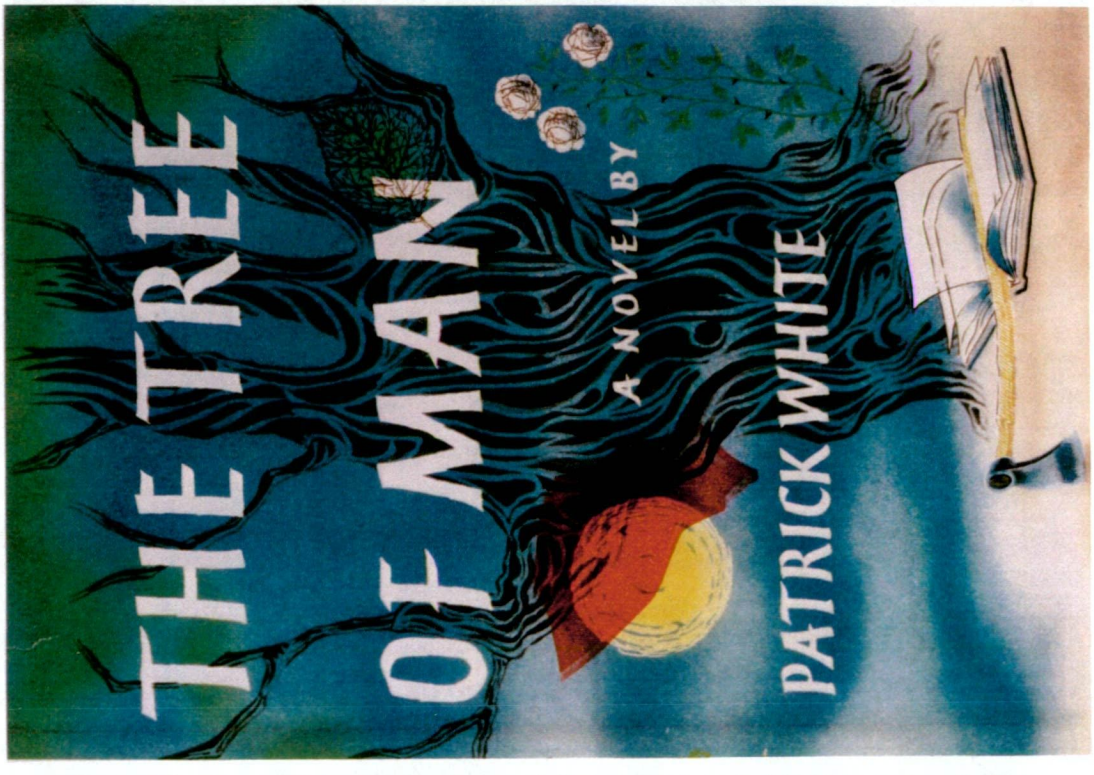


Figure 75 – Cover illustration by George Salter credited on inside front cover of *The Tree of Man*, New York: Viking, 1955.

form of artistic expression. White despised naturalism, "the dreary, dun-coloured offspring of journalistic realism" (*PWS* 16). Finley's man and eucalypts certainly fits this description. White was displeased with the "drab mess [of] gum trees [by] an amateur painter" used by E&S as the illustration for "the filthy jacket" of *The Tree of Man*. White was concerned that his writing would be misunderstood by its various cover-illustrations (*Letters* 112). When *The Tree of Man* was published by Viking in the United States (fig. 75), even though White was pleased with the American cover, he was concerned that

> an Australian critic, if [s]he saw it, would be bound to pounce on the "essential" tree and say "that is not a gum tree, therefore this is not an Australian novel," and condemn it on that account. Just as I am condemned and accused of being un-Australian because I have spent half my life outside the country – that is how their minds' work. (*Letters* 99)

Australia was looking for its "great Australian novelist" and at least Don Finley's uninspired gum-trees had announced that White was an Australian writer. Viking's cover illustration (fig. 75), painted by George Salter, has a large stylised oak-like tree in black lino-, wood-, or silk-screen print to create a wood-grain effect against a seemingly air-brushed blue background. Several images from the novel are also depicted: a dry veined leaf, a white rose-bush, a yellow sun shining through a red fragment (of glass), and a hoe propping open the splayed leaves of a book. Even though this cover is not the bland realism of Finley's illustration, it is still very much the product of an illustrator, and is not the work of an artist in tune with White's writing. White wanted covers that would be in harmony with his writing, that would operate as a powerful language in their own right, and that would also intertext with the text of the book.

The cover drawing that was adopted for *The Tree of Man* by Penguin when it began publishing White's works, is a sketch by Nolan called *Verandah*, 1953 (fig. 76). It depicts the verandah of a bush hut, a corrugated iron water tank, an old iron frame bed, and a dead-looking tree against a flat distant horizon and a featureless sky. Nolan's sketch dared to represent the poverty of the Australian bush; the dry, arid nature of the physical landscape, and the barrenness that could overtake lives lived in the isolation of the pioneer Australia. His artistic style and spare use of his medium

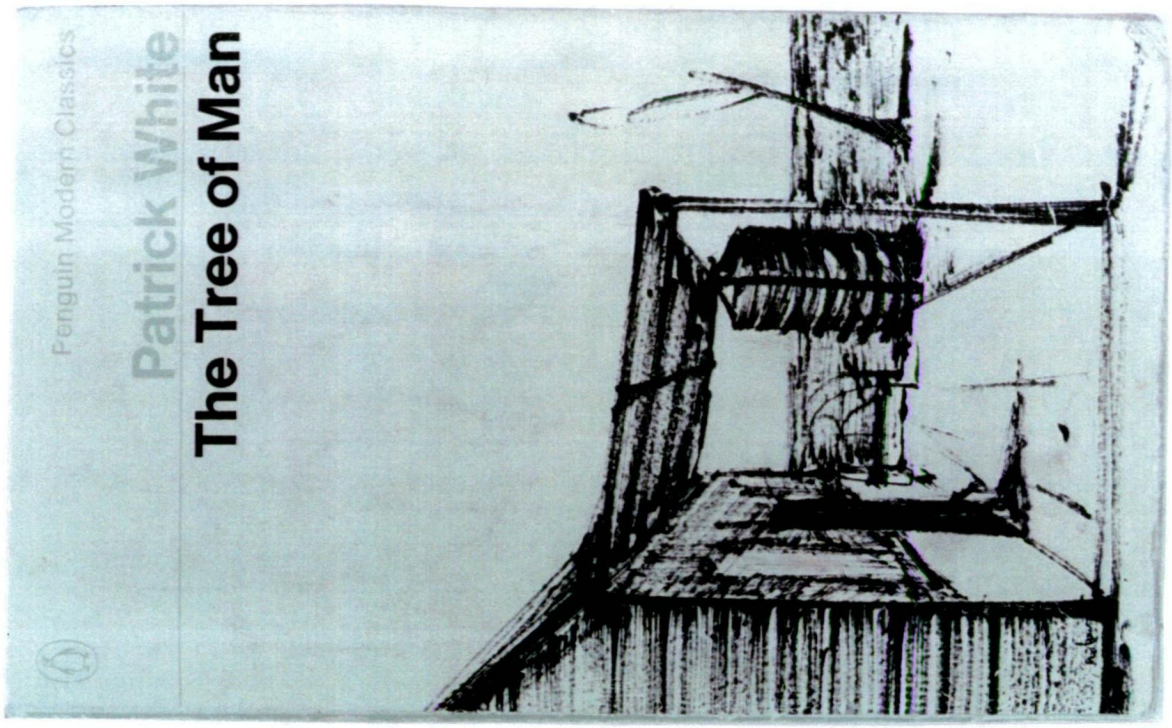


Figure 76 – Cover drawing by Sidney Nolan credited on back cover of *The Tree of Man*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977. (First published by Penguin 1961).

Figure 77 – *Carcase in Tree*, 1952, photograph, plate 48 of *SN*.

mimics the landscape it is representing. The sketch inter-images with scenes from the novel: in the opening pages of the novel, Stan Parker builds a house and "[f]inally he stuck on a veranda. It was too low, rather a frowning addition, but which did not forbid ... The man always brought back things in his cart ... He brought an iron bed, big and noisy, of which the bars had been bent a bit by kids shoving their heads between" (17). "Sometimes somebody would come in to fill the water-bag from Parkers' tank ... One young woman who was taken queer, and who came in to sit a while on the veranda, and to clean her face with a soaked handkerchief, said it was terrible lonely" (43). There is a tree in Nolan's sketch, but it does not foreground the Judaeo-Christian implications of Stan Parker's tree:

> [Stan Parker] had been brought up in a reverence for religion, but he had not yet needed God. He rejected, in his stiff clothes, the potentialities of prayer. He was strong still. He loved the enormous smooth tree that he had left standing outside the house. He loved.(35)

Nolan's tree, however, insinuates that no religious tree (whether tree of life, tree of knowledge, or crucifix) will flourish in the soil of the land "down under."

The roots of the both White's tree and that of Nolan go back into history, via Shakespeare (*Hamlet* intertexts with *The Tree of Man* [400-406]), past the Romans and an insinuated Christ (all mentioned in the lines of Housman's poem, reproduced in White's novel [376]), and to the mythical Adam and Eve. Thelma wonders "if it will be *knowledge*, not aspirin or ephedrene, that will bring relief" as she reads the poem about "the tree of man" (376 [emphasis added]). That White's *The Tree of Man* is attempting to overlay biblical myth onto the Australian bush is demonstrated in the following passage that describes a terrible storm:

> [h]is teeth were smiling in a taut, uncertain humour at the sky, the Adam's apple was isolated but insignificant in his throat. When suddenly he was altogether insignificant. A thing of gristle ... The whole earth was in motion, a motion of wind and streaming trees, and he was in danger of being carried with it. When was a little boy he had lain on ... a hard horsehair sofa and been carried through the books of the Old Testament on a wave of exaltation and fear. And now, brought to his knees, about to be hit over the head perhaps, a lightning flash lit his memory. God blew from the clouds, and men would scatter like leaves. (47)

The novel resonates with religious imagery drawn from Europe, that is displaced in both time and space as it is woven into a fictional Australian landscape. White was

ever the postcolonial writer, aware of the imposition of otherness onto Australian soil, and while there was much about Europe and other nations that he admired and respected (Japanese Noh drama, for instance), White wanted to see Australian-ness venerated, even if only the aspects of Australia he admired. If otherness was to be adopted, it was not to be imposed, but to be woven into whatever it was that Australia might be. For all White's disdain for the "suburbs" in Australia, Barry Humphries points out in *The Burning Piano*, that White was the first Australian to represent "suburbia" in Australian art. White's disdain for suburbia is now not only what is remembered of his texts, but also the pleasure of seeing Australia in text, in art.

Verandah was chosen by Penguin to illustrate *The Tree of Man*, from an array of potential images. How might Nolan's *Arabian Tree*, 1943 (fig. 72) have affected "The Penguin Modern Classic"? The ambiguous nature of Nolan's Arabian tree's species suits the fact that White's tree is obviously meant to be multi-faceted, referring to many archetypal trees. The fact that *Arabian Tree*, 1943 (fig. 72) is a Nolan painting, however, would draw *The Tree of Man* back into Australian territory. *Arabian Tree*, 1943 (fig. 72) was used as the cover of the now infamous edition of the journal *Angry Penguins*, the edition in which the Ern Malley poems had been published. The juxtaposition of an art-work inspired by arguably Australia's greatest literary "hoax," the poetry of which is almost pure intertextuality, with a work by an Australian writer whose work shimmers with intertextual play, would create an artistically and intellectually stimulating nexus for the cover of such a work.

"The tree of man" as a metaphor (especially for Christ's crucifixion) is a recurring motif throughout the works of both White and Nolan. There is an image of an old man who dies upside down in a tree in a flood in this Genesis-like novel:

> [i]n one place Stan Parker saw, stuck in the fork of a tree, the body of an old, bearded man. But he did not mention this. He rowed ... And soon the old man whose expression had not expected much, dying upside down in a tree, was obliterated by motion and rain ... "I thought youse were never coming," ... [a small spry woman] called. "I been waitin and waitin. Dad is gone in a little gimcrack bit of a boat the kids made one summer. I said, 'You're mad, you'll never do no such thing.' But he'd seen a ram stuck in a tree." ... "Did any of you men see Dad?' she asked. "An old man with a white beard?' But nobody had.(74)

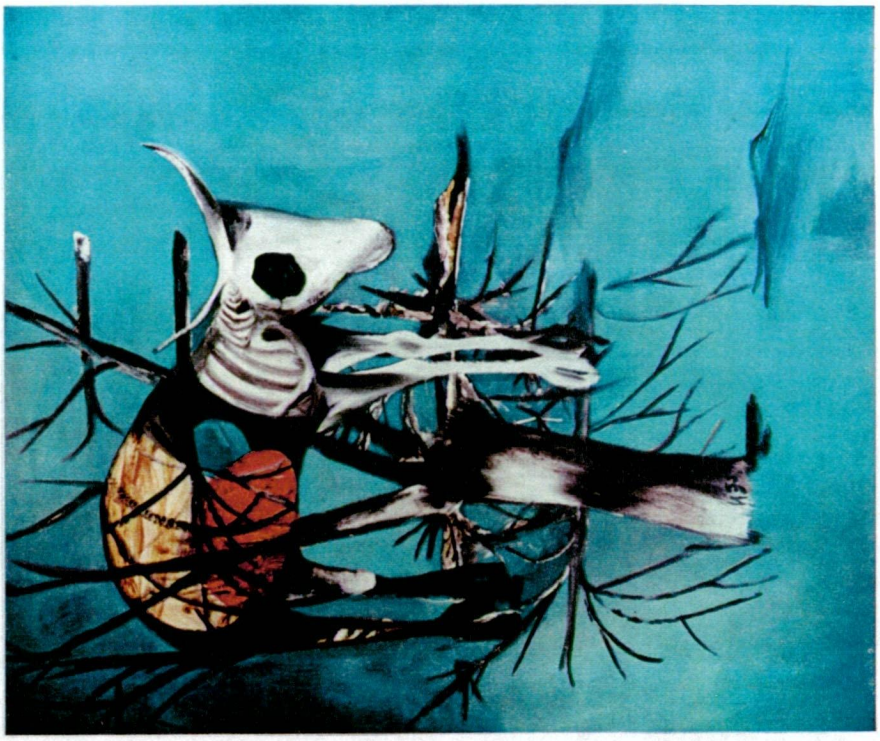


Figure 78 – *Ram Caught in Flood*, 1955, ripolin on masonite, 42 x 36 in., plate 50 of *SN*.

Figure 79 – *Baptism*, 1977, oil on hardboard, 122 x 91.5 cm, postcard attached to *Baptism and Flowers*, Woollahra, NSW: Rudy Komon Art Gallery, 1977.

White told Margaret Simons that there was one scene in *The Tree of Man* that might convince him to make a film of the novel, "If I could play that old man hanging upside down, that would be wonderful. Directors and authors like to appear in their own work. That would be my part. Upside down in a tree" (3). Both the old man and the ram who are stuck in trees in *The Tree of Man* resonate with the texts of Nolan's photographs, paintings and etchings of rams and a bull in trees after floods (figs. 77, 78), his many paintings of birds, angels and men floating upside down on his canvases (figs. 55, 59, 79, 131, 177), his numerous versions of Christ's death on a tree (figs. 16, 81, 122), Hal Missingham's photograph of a car in a tree, 1969 (fig. 80), and the notion of a potential alter-ending for Noah.[18] All these images also intertext with Himmelfarb's crucifixion in jacaranda tree (*RC* 409). With these images in mind, any of Nolan's representations of animals or men depicted in trees would also make pertinent intertextual cover-illustrations for White's *The Tree of Man.*

Nolan's brush drawing entitled *The Tree of Man*, 1961 (fig. 81) would also be an appropriate illustration for the cover of either White's *The Tree of Man* or *Riders in the Chariot.* In Nolan's image, the verandah floats on stilts. There are intimations of wrought iron which might be an iron bed, or a railing. There is a type of Christ-figure hanging (with both arms raised and tied together), from a drought-stricken tree. A wash has been dragged across the entire image at the level of the hanging figure's legs and feet. This wash creates the effect of something having rushed across the scene, as also occurs on the E&S cover of *Riders in the Chariot.* The wash also creates a mirage effect. There is another strange tree, or mushroom cloud, in the background. A whimsical smaller figure regards the Christ-figure from the verandah. The fabric dye used makes everything in the drawing seem almost insubstantial. It is as though the images might dissolve altogether. The title of the work would make the image seem especially appropriate as a cover for *The Tree of Man,* but because Himmelfarb is crucified in a tree on Australian soil, and because there a sense in which something may have sped (almost supernaturally) across the scene, the work

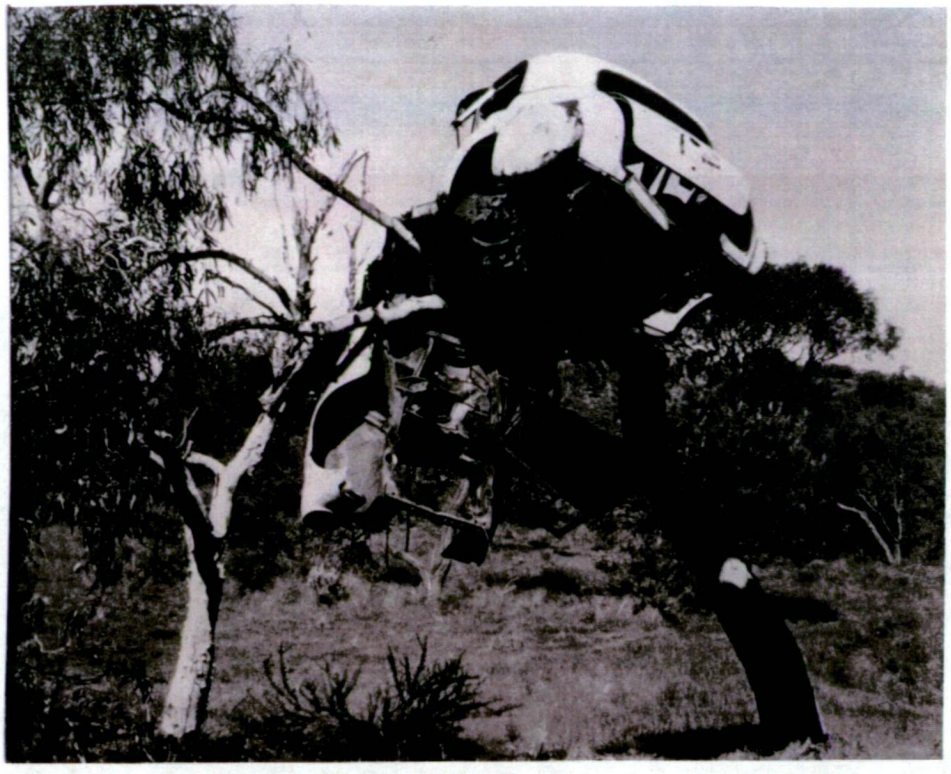
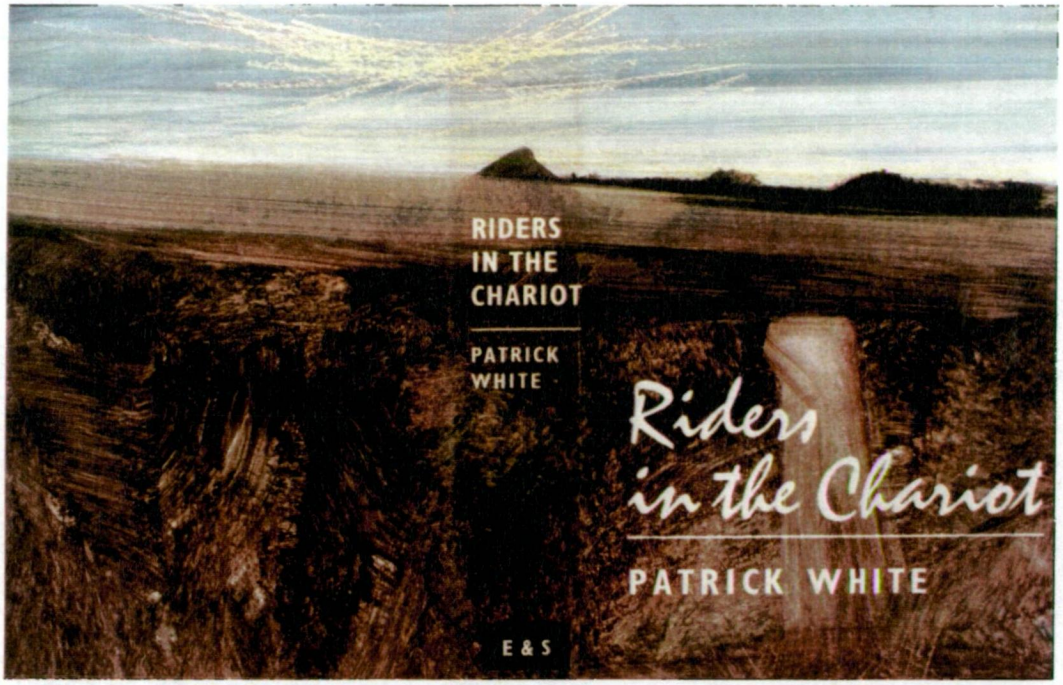


Figure 80 – Hal Missingham, photograph of a car in a tree, page 11 of Hal Missingham, *My Australia*, Sydney: Collins, 1969.

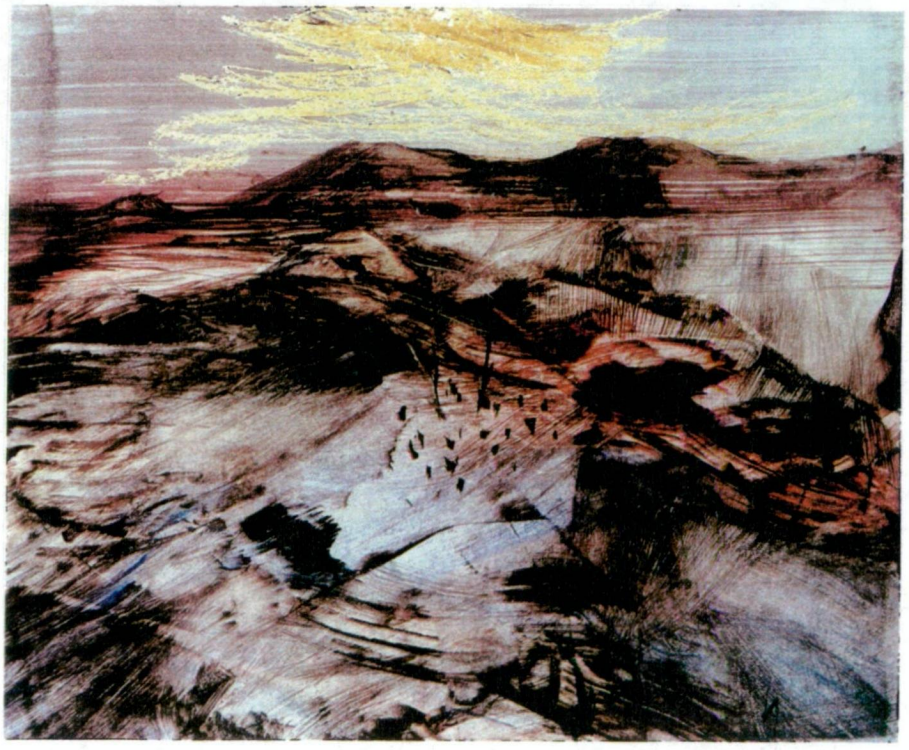
Figure 81 – *The Tree of Man*, 1961, fabric dye on paper, 63.8 x 52.5 cm, page 52 of *SND*.

also intertexts with *Riders in the Chariot* (both White's text and Nolan's E&S illustration for *Riders in the Chariot*). The colour used in Nolan's *The Tree of Man*, 1961 (fig. 81), and the ethereal nature of the figures, also intra-image with Nolan's *Gallipoli* series, which intertexts with the war narratives of *Riders in the Chariot*.



Dust-jacket of *Riders in the Chariot*, E&S, London: 1957 (fig. 82).

Once or twice air raids occurred. Then the train would lie ... alongside some placid field. In the darkened, reverberating boxes, many of the human beings no longer bothered to crouch, as if worse could not possibly happen to them. Their skins had become hides ...
Patrick White, *Riders in the Chariot*



Gallipoli landscape VI, c. 1958 (fig. 83).

Riders in the Chariot

The first cover to be commissioned of Nolan by White was for the first E&S edition of *Voss*. Later, White requested an illustration for the second edition of *The Aunt's Story*. "The jackets for *Voss* and *The Aunt's Story* were disappointing, but White's

regard for Nolan was so high that he accepted them both," and also asked Nolan to design a cover for *Riders in the Chariot*:

> [i]n London, Temple Smith at Eyre and Spottiswoode read eighty pages of the typescript and was very impressed, but then had to lend it to Sidney Nolan, who was to do the cover before leaving for Egypt. Back to Dogwoods came a chaotic letter from Cynthia Nolan saying how excited they were, and that Sid had almost decided what the jacket was to be. White found their enthusiasm most gratifying. "They are the first Australians to read it." (*PW* 375)

It was not Nolan, however, who finally selected the illustration for the novel:

> White was baffled [as to why Nolan was leaving London for Egypt without having finished his commission]. "He is the one to do a jacket if he would only get down to it. I know he would understand the book. I know from his wife that it appealed to them ... [Now] I feel too many Egyptian images will get in the way. However, there is just a faint hope. Things have a habit of rising up out of a painter's unconscious suddenly without warning." (*PW* 379)

"[Q]uite accidentally Temple Smith came across a series of ten or twenty works clearly painted in response to *Riders in the Chariot*. He took one over Cynthia's objections, and it turned out to be the finest of Sid Nolan's jackets for Patrick White" (*PW* 379). In the E&S cover illustration (fig. 82), the crayon scratches in the sky can signify air raids, the chariot of God from Ezekiel, and intensity of emotion and spirit. Nolan's cover reads intertextually as first World War, second World War, all other wars, Trojan soil, European soil, and Australian landscape, thereby conflating historical, geographical, and artistic boundaries. The E&S cover of *Riders in the Chariot* intertexts with *Gallipoli landscape VI*, c. 1958 (fig. 83), and *Gallipoli landscape VII*, c. 1958. In both these works Nolan makes use of the same crayon scratching to create a sky that is not at peace, a sky that is pregnant either with impending glory or doom. As with many of Nolan's works, however, the images might symbolise other emotions if they were not associated with their titles. Because we know the images to be directly linked with the *Gallipoli* series, it is easy to read war into the heightened energy of the landscapes which might otherwise signify ecstasy. This doubling of signification intertexts with the novel in which the four riders do experience both great joy, and great suffering as riders.

Barbed Wire Entanglement, 1960 (fig. 84), another work from the *Gallipoli* series, also intertexts with *Riders in the Chariot*. When Himmelfarb escapes through

Figure 84 – *Barbed Wire Entanglement*, 1960, oil crayon and acrylic on card, 25.4 x 30.4 cm, AWM, page 51 of *NG*.

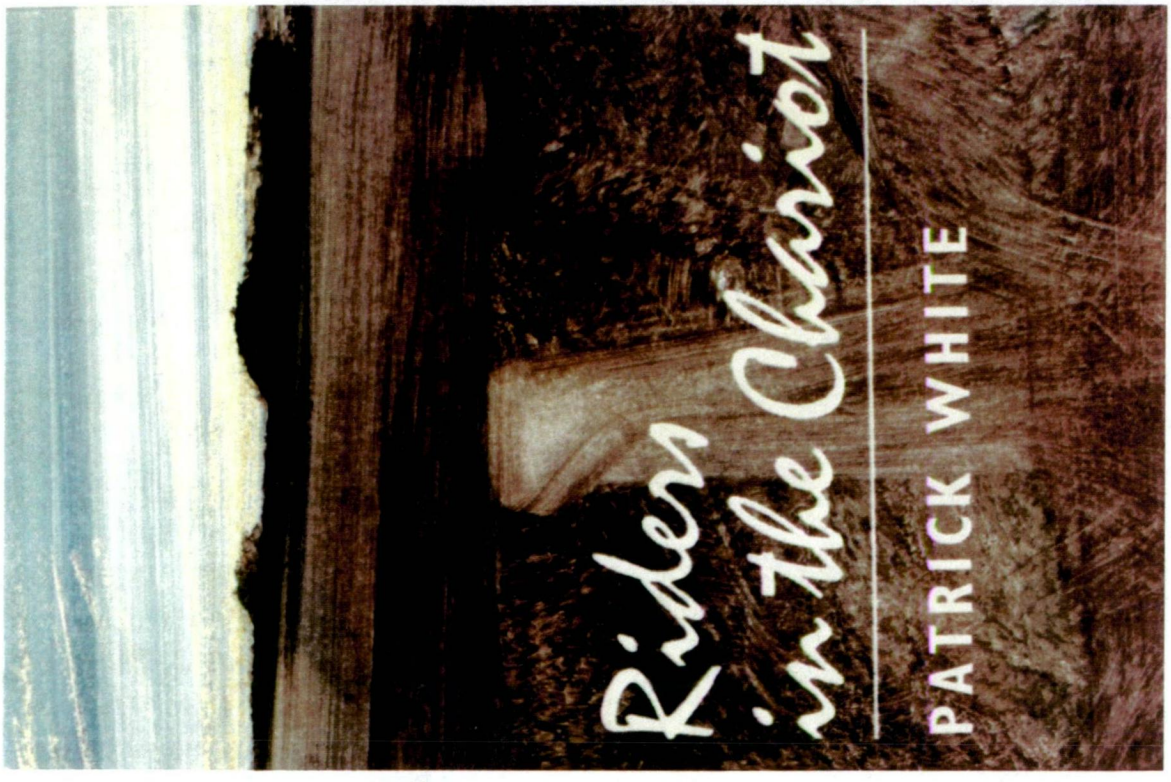


Figure 85 – Cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on inside front cover of *Riders in the Chariot*, London: E&S, 1961. (Front view only.)

the barbed wire fence of his prison camp, he has lost his spectacles and so cannot see properly:

> [a]s he crawled he searched.
> Or looked up at the *orange blur*, which seemed by now to be invading the whole of existence ... He touched wire. He tore his hands on the barbs of wire ... Someone had simply cut the wire. Then the Jew ... went out, still upon his knees ... He must get up ... [T]he barbs entered his forehead, and [he] was not surprised to put out his hands and grasp a fresh agony of wire. It was, of course, the outer fence ... All of him was tearing – flesh, breath, the stuff of his clothes – as he wrenched himself out of the grip of the wire.(185 [emphasis added])

Nolan's *Barbed Wire Entanglement*, 1960 (fig. 84) has a similar sky to that on the cover of *Riders in the Chariot*, which can be read as signifying the apocalyptic, overwhelming sense of doom that accompanies war. In *Barbed Wire Entanglement*, 1960 (fig. 84), there is an orange blur, and there is a figure grappling with wire. We only know that it is barbed wire because of the work's title, but the entire work (image and title) inter-images with this section of White's text.[19]

In the *Gallipoli* series, Nolan makes use of washes, and the technique of scraping back, in order to insinuate the fragility of the earth and human beings, neither of which seem particularly solid or lasting in the works from this series.[20] The combination of messy and broad brushstrokes on the cover of *Riders in the Chariot* suggests both turmoil and movement. When the entire cover of the book is viewed opened out, it is as though something has sped directly across the landscape leaving a trail of vapour (fig. 85). The downward brush-stoke which drops out of this horizontal vapour reads as a figure whose head has been consumed by the vapour trail, which might be either that of an other-worldly vision, or that of a weapon of war. This headless figure also intertexts with some of Nolan's ghostly images in the *Africa* series, such as *Rimbaud at Harar*, 1963 and *Ethiopia*, 1963. In *Ethiopia*, 1963, a shrouded figure stands in air that appears to be moving rapidly about its head. The body of the figure is ambiguous, half-present in the image, half-translated into the atmosphere. The body of *Rimbaud at Harar* is similarly translucent and shrouded. The head is its most formed aspect, but inter-imaging with the cover of Nolan's E&S *Riders in the Chariot* (fig. 85), Rimbaud's head may, at any moment, burst away as it either receives a vision (like those experienced by the four riders in Ezekiel's chariot),

or as it encounters an intertextual shell-blast (if Nolan's cover is read in the context of his *Gallipoli* series).

The Viking edition of *Riders in the Chariot* has a cover illustration credited to George Salter. The blue cover uses yellow text for the title of the novel, and white text for the author's name and the words "A Novel." On the front there is a stylised sun set above the works of the title, and on the bottom of the cover there are what look like stylised arms and hands emerging out of red flames. On the reverse of the dust-jacket, the c-shaped hands, and the rectangular arms, are shown to be the faces of people fighting with open mouths forming the "c" shapes. What appear to be arms on the front cover become the bodies of these people. As well as these fighting figures, which are at the bottom of the illustration, there are sketches (in white on blue) of Mrs Godbold and her children, Himmelfarb being covered with a sheet by Mrs Godbold and Miss Hare (who is wearing her hat), and also a seated figure which might be Dubbo. Salter's style inter-images with his other covers (for *The Tree of Man* and *Voss*, for instance), and links together these Viking editions of White's works. The flames and human hands on the cover links poignantly to the warring human figures on the back cover. The illustration is based far more in a narrative style than that of Nolan's *Gallipoli* image. I would argue that Nolan's E&S image is an epigraph that acts as an integral intertext with White's novel, whereas the Salter illustration, while tasteful enough, is merely decorative.

White said of Nolan's first illustration for *Riders in the Chariot*::

> [h]ad a very nice letter from Sid Nolan, and the original of the *Riders* jacket so my collection of Nolans is growing without my ever having bought one! This painting is so much subtler and to the point when you actually see it; one would say it had actually been designed for the book, which in fact was not the case. I do hope the Nolans will come back here. His painting gives me such a lot in my work, and he claims I do the same for him. (*Letters* 198-99)

When Penguin began publishing *Riders in the Chariot* they used a Nolan image of a woman wearing a hat (fig. 86). White writes, "I am anxious to see the cover of the Penguin *Riders in the Chariot* which I am told is excellent in every way" (*Letters* 270-71). The head intratexts with other Nolan distraught portraits made both in the 1940s (*Menopause*, 1946 [fig. 87]), and in the 1960s (*Head*, 1964 [fig. 88]). Nolan made a

Figure 86 – Cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on the back cover of *Riders in the Chariot*, Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1974. (First published by Penguin in 1964).

Figure 87 – *Menopause*, 1946, ripolin on masonite, 36 x 28 in., page 5 of Charles Osborne, *Masterpieces of Nolan*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1975.

series of female portraits designed to inter-image with White's exploration of people in Australian suburbia (*Letters* 259). Nolan's ambiguous head on the cover of *Riders in the Chariot* (fig. 86) also intra-images with his *Gallipoli* series because the faces in the *Gallipoli* series are often similarly wooden or earth-coloured. It also inter-images with *Soldier, Arthur Boyd*, 1959 and *Kenneth*, 1958 where both soldiers wear lavish hats. Even though it does inter-image with the *Gallipoli* series, however, the image on the Penguin cover of *Riders in the Chariot* (fig. 86) primarily foregrounds ideas about women wearing hats in either suburbia or "society." The epigraphic suggestions inherent on the E&S cover, of war and suffering, are therefore replaced by ironic notions about social conventions. Mrs Godbold and Miss Hare, two of the riders, wear hats.[21] The bigoted Mrs Jolley and Mrs Flack, two "Church of England" ladies, are also represented in hats (424). We also see the ironic depiction of society women at lunch in their hats:

> [t]hese were obviously three ladies of importance ... [who] were wearing rather amusing hats. The first ... had chosen an enormous satin bon-bon, of screeching pink, swathed so excessively on one side that the head conveyed an impression of disproportion, or deformity, or bulbous growth ... The second lady was wearing on her head a lacquered crab-shell ... [T]here it sat, one real claw offering a diamond starfish, the other dangling a miniature conch in polished crystal ... The third ... affected the most amusing hat of all. On her blue curls she had perched an innocent little conical felt, of a drab, an earth colour, so simple and unassuming that the owner might have been mistaken for some old, displaced clown, until it was noticed that fashion had tweaked the felt almost imperceptibly, and that smoke – yes, actual smoke – was issuing out of the ingenious cone.(479)

The be-hatted figure on the cover of the Penguin *Riders in the Chariot* (fig. 86) might convey any or all of these women.

As well as the women in *Riders in the Chariot*, however, the head on the cover of the Penguin *Riders in the Chariot* also intra-images with the four Nolan heads used on the cover of the E&S edition of *The Burnt Ones* (fig. 89). Of the cover White says, "I think the jacket is marvellous as itself, but I can't feel it has a great connexion with the contents of the book. Still, it is so arresting I am sure it will sell a great many copies" (*Letters* 270). As well as reading intertextually as the four riders in the chariot of White's novel, the anguished faces of the four figures on the cover also intratext with the woman in *Menopause*, 1946 (fig. 87) who might be one of the "burnt ones,"

Figure 88 – *Head*, 1964, oil on hardboard, 122 x 122 cm, plate 21 of *N*.

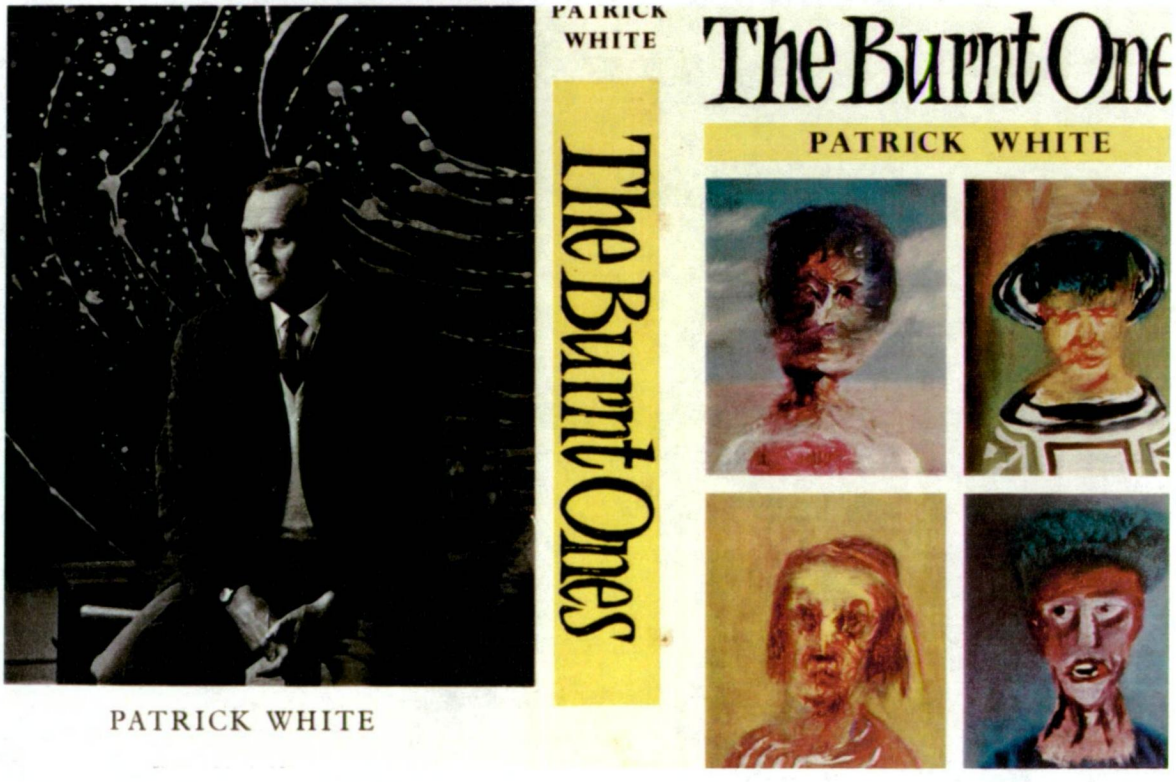


Figure 89 – Four Nolan paintings appear on the E&S first edition of *The Burnt Ones*.
They are, from left to right, and from top to bottom:
Country Woman, 1965, oil on hardboard, 121.9 x 121.9 cm;
Greek Head, 1965, oil on hardboard, 121.9 x 121.9 cm;
Adolescent, 1965, oil on hardboard, 121.9 x 121.9 cm;
Suburb, 1965, oil on hardboard, 121.9 x 121.9 cm.
First exhibited Marlborough-Gerson Gallery, New York, 1965.

the poor unfortunates, the OY KAYMENOI.[22] On the reverse cover of both the Jonathan Cape and the Viking editions of *The Burnt Ones*, White sits photographed in front of Nolan's *The Galaxy* (fig. 89). This painting, again intratexting with Nolan's *Gallipoli* series, invites readings of *The Burnt Ones* that draw in metaphors of the great suffering of war.

Cover illustration of 1958 E&S *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 90).

Daguerreotypes and silhouettes,
Her grandfather and great great aunts,
Supported on the mantelpiece
An *Invitation to the Dance.*
T. S. Eliot,
"A Cooking Egg."

other covers

In 1958, Nolan arrived in New York with a new dust-jacket design for *The Aunt's Story*, which was first published in 1948 with a different cover illustration, a black and white reproduction of Roy de Maistre's *The Garden*, 1945 (fig. 13). Adams writes,

> [a]fter reading the book, Nolan had found it difficult to come to grips with the illustration because the novel was structured as a three-part narrative, but he had made a likeness of what he assumed was the correct woman's face ... "Damn it! That's not the woman" [erupted White] Nolan had illustrated the wrong character, but there were more covers to follow and White became a keen collector of the artist's work.(*SNSIL* 138, 142)

The rather wooden face of the woman in the E&S illustration (fig. 90), however, is not really unbelievable as Theodora. Theodora is often referred to as sallow, even "dry, and leathery, and yellow," and she is certainly not depicted as a classically beautiful woman in the novel (12). Perhaps White thought it not to be the woman, but I read the profiled figure as inter-imaging with Theodora. Her head is surrounded by a brownish yellow circular haze reminiscent of the many hallowed Byzantine icons viewed by Theodora, and it also signifies Theodora's unique universe, and her vision of corn toward the end of the novel (177).

In 1963 a different Nolan illustration was used for the cover of a Penguin version of *The Aunt's Story* (fig. 22). This work inter-images with Nolan's painting of a woman on her way to mass, painted during his time at Heide (fig. 21). White writes:

> "Sid is doing the cover for the Penguin edition of *The Aunt's Story*. I had seen an early painting of his which seemed to convey much more of Theodora Goodman than the jacket he did for the E. & S. hard-cover edition, and now he is going to try to do something along the lines of that early painting of a woman caught in her net veil." (*Letters* 228-9)

The veil of the hat on the Penguin "aunt" (fig. 22) intertexts with the beginning of *The Aunt's Story*. After Theodora's mother has died, rather than staying in the emotional constraints expected by society of those "in mourning," Theodora longs for freedom:

> [b]ut now freedom, the antithesis of stuff or glass, possessed Theodora Goodman to the detriment of grief ...
> "And what are your plans, Theo?" asked Frank.
> "I shall probably go away."
> "Good heavens," said Fanny, "Where?"
> Freedom was still a blunt weapon. Theodora did not answer, because she did not know ... I shall go, said Theodora, I have already gone.(12, 17, 132)

The black hat also inter-images with the hat worn by Theodora at the end of the novel, "[h]er face was long and yellow under the great black hat" (287). Nolan's Penguin illustration seems far more appropriate a visual epigraph than that used by Penguin for later editions. A detail from Tom Roberts's *Eileen*, was used by Penguin for *The Aunt's Story* as part of a series utilising the works of Australian painters to valorise Australian writing (fig. 91). Nolan's *Mrs Fraser and the convict*, 1962-64 (fig. 148) was used in this series as the cover of *A Fringe of Leaves* (fig. 151), but both Nolan's images of the aunt were ignored in this series, as potential cover-

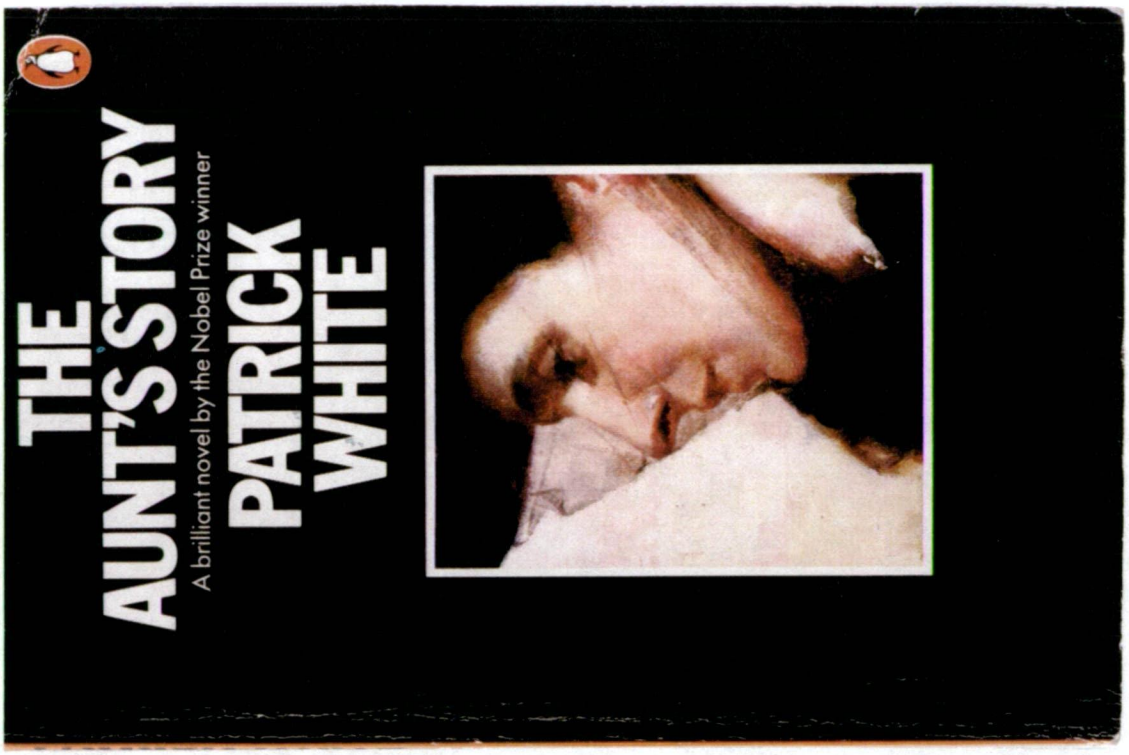


Figure 91 – Cover illustration, a detail from *Eileen*, 1892 by Tom Roberts, credited on back cover of *The Aunt's Story*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987. (First published by Penguin, 1961). *Eileen*, 1892, oil on canvas, 48.9 x 36.2 cm, AGNSW, plate 30 of Virginia Spate, ed., *Tom Roberts*, Melbourne: Lansdowne Australian Art Library, 1978.

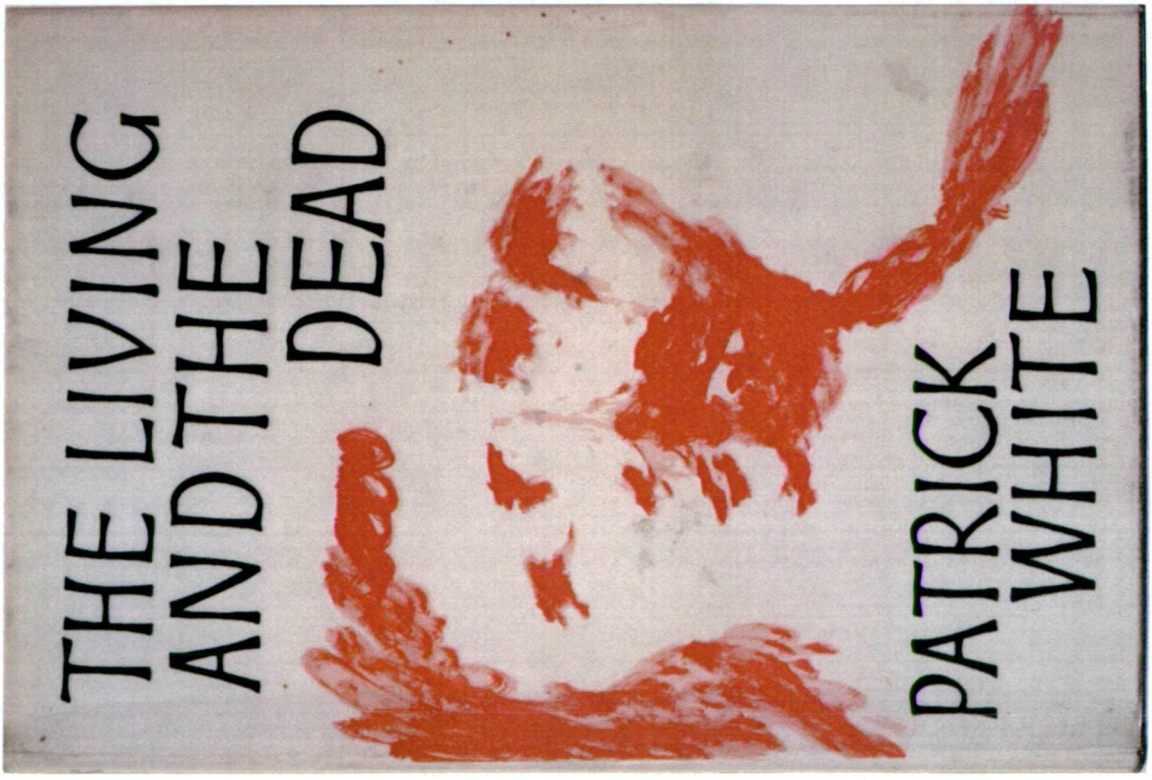


Figure 92 – Cover illustration by Sidney Nolan credited on dust-jacket of *The Living and the Dead*, London: E&S, 1962.

illustrations for *The Aunt's Story*, in favour of Roberts's more "appealing," genteel and realistic *Eileen* (fig. 91). Nolan's later aunt appears to be imprisoned by her veil and there is something quite disturbed about her eyes that inter-images with the eyes of Nolan's [unhelmeted] *Kelly Head*, 1947 (fig. 201). Even though the novel begins with the death of Theodora's mother, Nolan's veil also reads as a series of bars which read as rigid thoughts or societal constraints. These "bars" inter-image well both with Theodora's flouting of social conventions and with the fragmented mind she experiences during the second and third sections of the novel. Eileen's veil, however, is a realistic representation of a griever's veil. The realism of Roberts's painting works directly against White's writing which reads both as realism, and also as ventures into abstraction.

The E&S second edition of *The Living and the Dead* has a Nolan illustration on its dust-jacket (fig. 92). The illustration is not named, and depicts a female and a male face cheek to cheek. The illustration is not particularly significant, but serves to draw the *oeuvres* of the two men into an intertextual interplay that might not have been as resonant without the wide use of Nolan cover illustrations for White's works. The alliance between White and Nolan was one built on artistic affinities, but it was not to last. "[W]hen Cape was looking for a designer for the jacket of *The Twyborn Affair*, White told Maschler, 'Nolan would not be at all right, anyway, we are no longer in touch'" (*PW* 572). At the end of his life, Barbara Mobbs reports, the writer would only accept letters on the covers of his books, as illustrations caused too much dissension (figs. 93 & 94).[23] Photographs of the author's face are depicted on the "lettered" Jonathan Cape dust-jackets of *Flaws in the Glass* (fig. 93) and *Memoirs of Many in One* (fig. 94), attesting to the fact that the author is still very much a part of the material productions of books in our society. It is appropriate to picture the author on the cover of a self-portrait such as *Flaws in the Glass*, but ironically White is attempting to create a fictional author in *Memoirs of Many in One*, the author of which is supposedly Alex Demirjian Gray. This fictive device is undermined immediately by White's face appearing on the back-cover of the book.

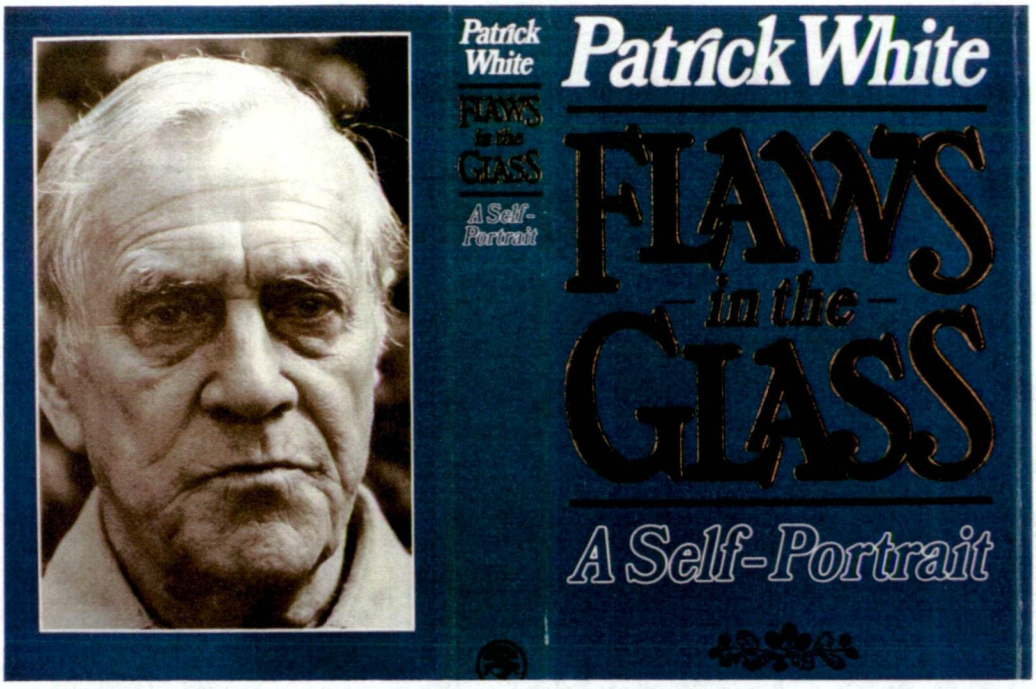


Figure 93 – Jacket design by Mon Mohan credited on dust jacket of *Flaws in the Glass*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1981. (Author's photograph by J. Wong credited on dust jacket.)

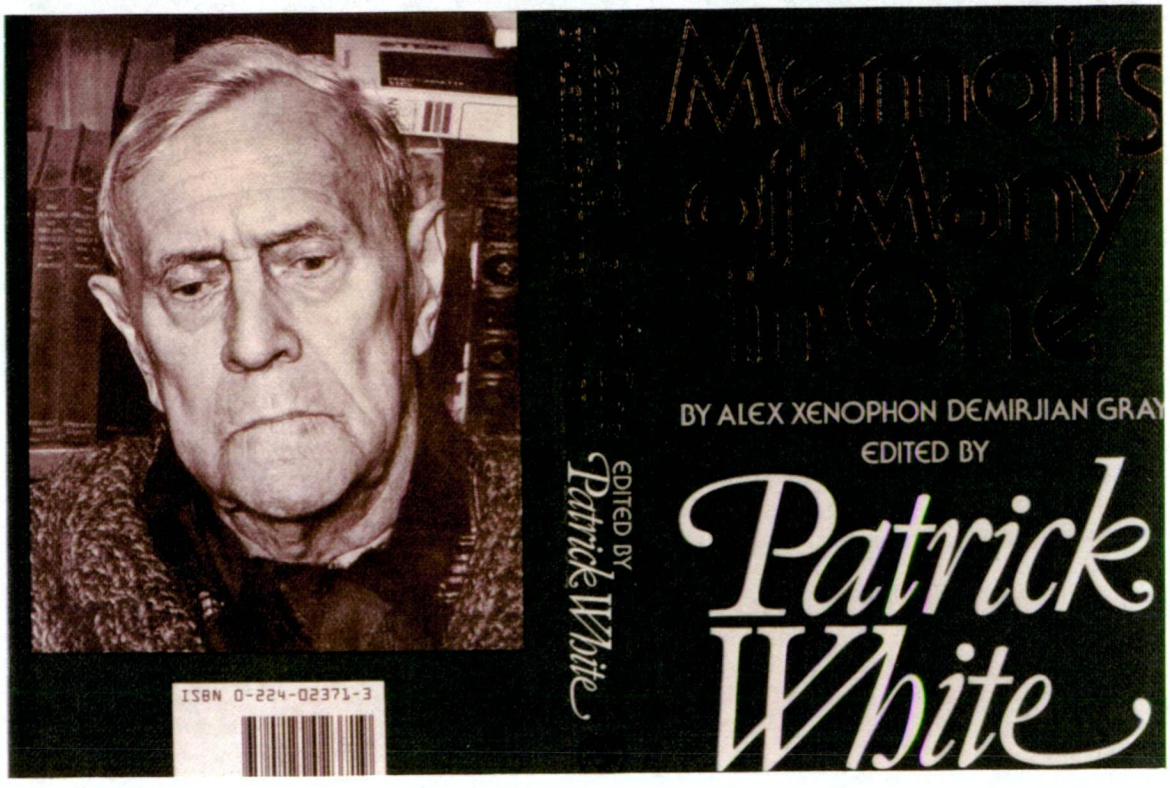


Figure 94 – Jacket design by Mon Mohan credited on dust jacket of *Memoirs of Many in One*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1986. (Author's photograph by William Yang, credited on dust jacket.)

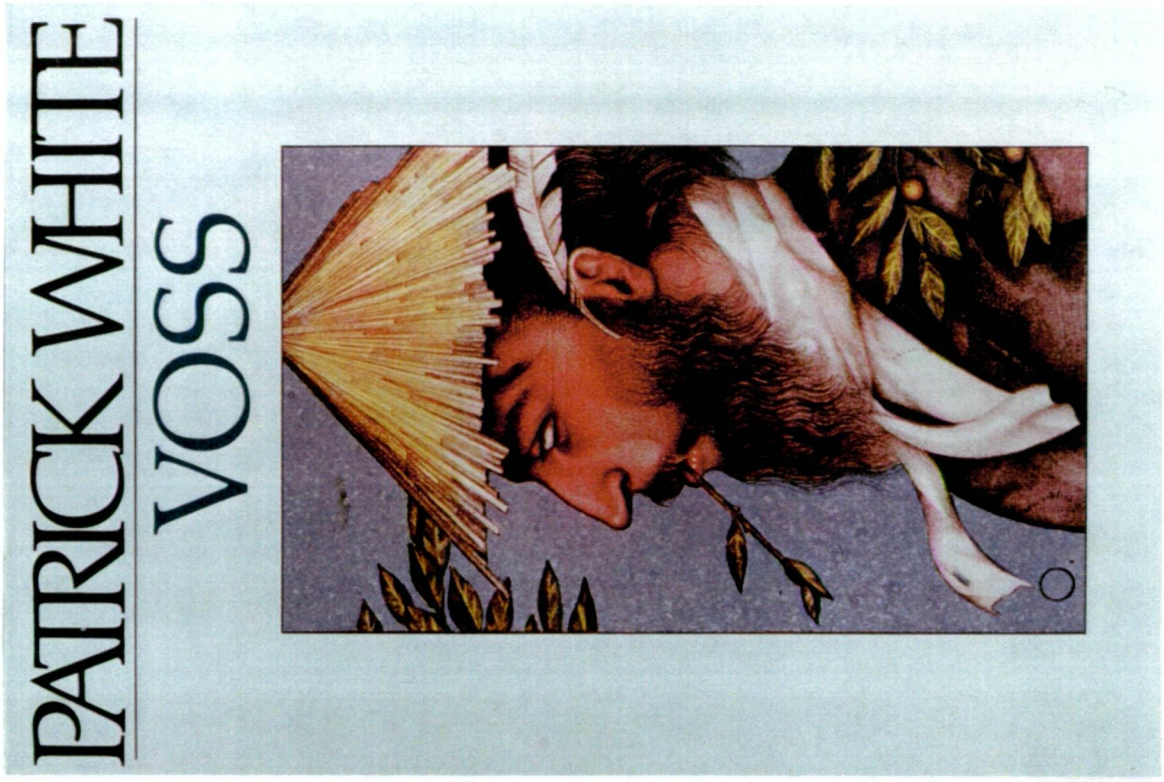


Figure 95 – Cover design by Neil Stuart and cover illustration by Mel Odom credited on back cover of *Voss*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1980.

Figure 96 – Cover illustration by John Mann, credited on dust jacket of Daniel Bunce, *Travels with Dr Leichhardt in Australia*, ed., Russel Ward, Melbourne: Oxford U P, 1979.

In the early 1980s, Penguin commissioned Mel Odom to provide cover illustrations for all new editions of White's works. Odom's Leichhardt-like depiction of Voss (fig. 95), grounded in historical realism, intertexts with the fact that White loosely based the action of his novel on the German explorer Leichhardt (fig. 96). The direct link to the historiographic aspect of the novel, however, valorises history over art, and delimits readerly expectations. Mel Odom's cover-illustration also denies readers the overt invitation to read the epigraphic function of Nolan's *Voss*-image, and prevents them from being alerted to the fact that much of *Voss* can be read as inter-imaging with other works from Nolan's *oeuvre*. Odom's *Riders in the Chariot* cover has a sand-coloured horse's head set against a pink sky which has been splattered with yellow and pale blue speckles (possibly signifying apocalypse). There is red outback-like earth. The horse is bridled, and powerful, and intertexts with the Odilon Redon's image of Apollo's horse-driven chariot (fig. 170), which is most probably the painting to which the text of *Riders in the Chariot* refers when Alf Dubbo, in the Public Library, again finds the painting he had seen before as a boy:

> [b]ut once he came across the painting by a Frenchman of the Apollonian chariot on its trajectory across the sky ... He realized how differently he saw this painting since his first acquaintance with it, and how he would now transcribe the Frenchman's limited composition into his own terms of motion.(342)

Redon's image intertexts with Odom's horse, but Redon's image is not chosen by Dubbo in order to convey the power or the impetus of the chariot in his vision. Blake's epigraph intertexts with the books of Ezekiel and Isaiah, and Blake has both prophets assert that their visions of God are mysterious, and intangible. Both Miss Hare and Mrs Godbold see horses, but there is also always a desire by White to keep the text enmeshed in a refusal to state exactly the nature of the various chariots:

> "Gold," Miss Hare mumbled. "Champing at the bit. Did you ever see the horses? I haven't yet. But at times the wheels crush me unbearably."
>
> Mrs Godbold remained a seated statue. The massive rumps of her horses waited, swishing their tails through eternity. The wheels of her chariot were solid gold, well-axled, as might have been expected. Or so it seemed to the sick woman whose own vision never formed, remaining a confusion of light, at most an outline of vague and fiery pain.(67)

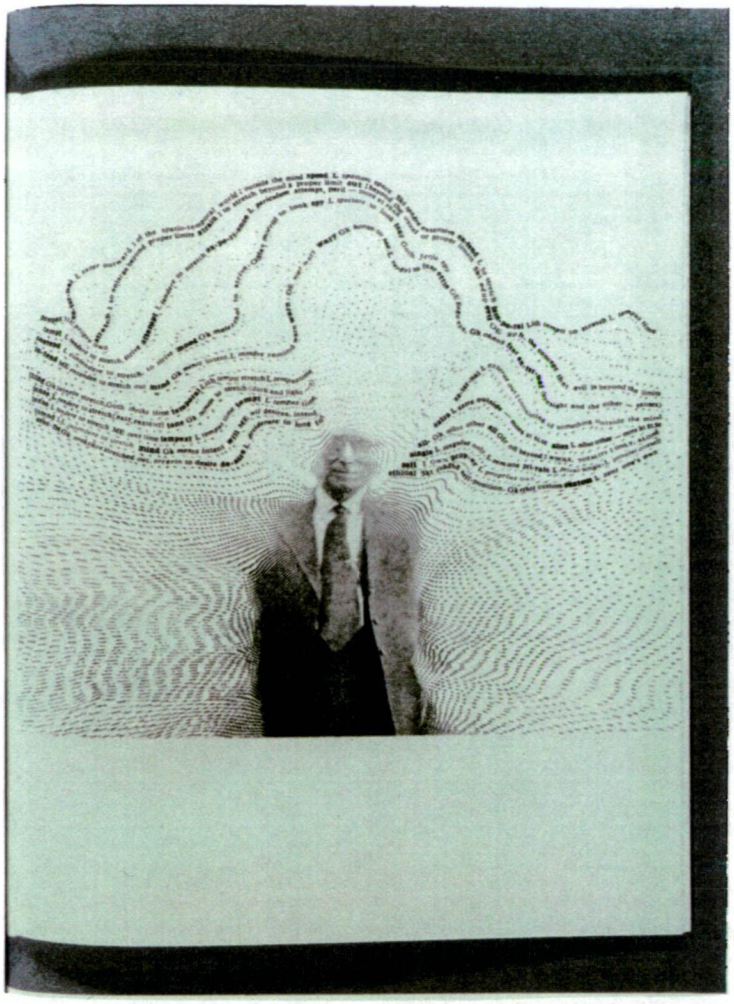
When he is in Europe, Himmelfarb's wife asks him which chariot he is drawing, to which he replies:

> "That, I am not sure ... It is difficult to distinguish. Just when I think I have understood, I discover some fresh form – so many – streaming with implications. There is the throne of God, for instance ... then there is the Chariot of Redemption, much more shadowy, poignant, personal. And the faces of the riders. I cannot begin to see the expression of the faces." (135-36)

Himmelfarb and Dubbo both read from the book of Ezekiel in the Brighta Bicycle Lamps factory's wash-room:

> [a]nd I looked and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself ... Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. (309)

Odom's image intertexts with White's novel, but Nolan's image, as earlier described, inter-images maximally with the various contexts of White's multifarious text which desires ambiguity and resists closures. I would contend, then, that Nolan's images operate as visual epigraphs for White's works, and as such, ought to be considered as integral parts of material productions of White's novels and not discarded, just as written epigraphs are not edited out of works. Even though, there is no evidence that the cover change by Penguin in the early 1980s was motivated by White's disagreement with Nolan, it is odd that publishers have been reticent to use Nolan's illustrations for White's works since this disagreement. Would the Malouf epigraph in *The Twyborn Affair*, have been removed if Malouf and White had argued, or, indeed, if Malouf's epigraph was thought to have become unfashionable over a period of time? Visual epigraphs are not thought to be sufficiently part of a textual production in this society, it seems, to be accorded the same textual respect as written language.



Bonnie Gordon, *The Anatomy of the Image-Maps, according to Merriam-Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, 1982 (fig. 97).

As an audience accustomed to the notion of art-as-text, we ought to be entirely at ease with the medium of the artist's book which condenses the space of an installation of image and text into the palpable measure of that which one can hold in one's hands. Its metaphoric space, however, extends beyond its physical dimensions – its space embraces both temporal and imaginative boundaries.
Elizabeth Cross

livre d'artiste

Much that is written about artists' books as a genre sets up a dichotomy between what is *not* an artist's book (that is anything that does not continually question the medium of *the book*) and that which is art (the artist's book). There is almost always a judgement that is made in this evaluation, one artefact is most definitely art, and the other is either boring or at least common. Criticism of artists' books, however, has a lot to offer literary criticism because it foregrounds the book as a medium in itself, not just a vessel for the printed text, illustrated, possibly with images. The physical

aspects of a book – covers, epigraphs, variety of paper, fonts, print-colour, page-size, illustrations – become part of what it is that writer/artists can enjoin in their works. Signifiers are liberated from the page – imagine arriving at page twenty-five and being directed to go and watch a film before continuing, or to sit in a garden and regard a flower for half an hour, or to eat a sticky, sweet cake. Artists' books embrace the entire work, and intertextuality and inter-imagery become commonplace as the printed page is no longer a block of text – it may become, at any moment, a vision like that of Bonnie Gordon's *The Anatomy of the Image-Maps, according to Merriam-Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language*, 1982 (fig. 97). Readers have always been capable of escaping from the printed page, but with new technology, there is no longer any need for the printed page to be constrained by endless blocks of typed text.

Intertextuality operates whenever readers interact with any form of reality. Some types of material culture, however, invite more intertextual interactions because of the forms in which they have been constructed. Gary Catalano points out that

> the book ... meets its reader as an equal. Whereas a play or a film unfolds its acts or scenes in a single sitting and admits no alteration, a book allows its readers to explore the work in their own good time. (Catalano 84)

Books provide spaces for contemplation. What is wrong then with blocks and blocks of typed text? Davids and Petrillo comment that:

> much of the 500-year history of the printed book has been dominated by the inviolability of the written word. The text block is a fortress, the treasures of meaning hidden within, and the alien claims of the visual sealed out. The inflexibility of metal type is partly to blame, but really we're in the presence of an old, stern, and rigid cultural attitude about the written – especially the printed – word. Only in children's books [newspapers] and advertising have words been allowed to appear in short fragments, more or less freely interspersed with images (children [newspapers] and profit have their own special cultural priorities). (Davids & Petrillo 160)

Lucy Lippard also laments the restricted use of images as signifiers in our printed matter:

> [p]ossibly the most far-reaching innovation of artists' books is their juxtaposition of images and words on a page. Words and pictures have, of course, shared the pages of books for centuries... [b]ut generally the cultural uses of words and pictures share some important characteristics; there is usually a *direct* relationship between language and images – one

> illustrating the other – most often in the service of a linear narrative. This straightforward relationship, this norm, has been imitated, parodied, altered, undermined, and sometimes completely revamped in artists' books. And, in the process, a new form of visual literature has been created.(Rice 59)

Proponents of artists' books are anxious to differentiate them from other sorts of books. Surely all books would benefit, however, from the sort of revision of book-making and book-publishing that is being aimed for, and advocated by, the makers and defenders of artists' books.

Carrión writes an essay in a series of sentences, each of which is separated by a double space, and all of which are typed in emboldened print. The sentences are separated into sets of three or fewer sentences by ellipses (which suggests ironically that there might be more sentences that have been omitted). The four-dot ellipses play with the idea of reading between the lines and filling the written text with readerly ideas, including imported virtual intertexts. This innovative essay foregrounds the mechanisms by which a book, or any printed text, is made. It desires that everyone included in the production of books, including readers, see the phenomenon of a book anew. The essay propose that the conventions of the book be liberated into a new arena of possibilities:

> **WHAT A BOOK IS**
>
> **A book is a sequence of spaces.**
>
> **. . . . [Carrión's ellipsis; all other ellipses and square brackets added.]**.
>
> **In the old art the writer writes texts.**
> **In the new art the writer makes books ...**
>
> **The old art assumes that printed words are printed on an ideal space.**
>
> **The new art knows that books exist as objects in an exterior reality subject to concrete conditions of perception, existence, exchange, consumption, use, etc ...**
>
> **The words of the new book are there not to transmit certain mental images with a certain intention.**
>
> **They are there to form, together with other signs, a space-time sequence that we identify with the name "book" ...**
>
> **Words cannot avoid meaning something, but they can be divested of intentionality ...**
>
> **A book consists of various elements, one of which might be a [written] text.**

> **A text that is part of a book isn't necessarily the most essential or important part of that book ...**
>
> **For new art's authors language is an enigma, a problem; the book hints at ways to solve it ...**
>
> **The new art uses any manifestation of language, since the author has no other intention than to test the language's ability to mean something. (Carrión 31-41)**

These comments have all been made in relation to Carrión's desire to champion artists' books, but the comments chosen in the above quotation are all relevant to books in any medium. White would have preferred to have made films, or to have painted pictures, and had he been born in a different era, he might have tried. Had he thought of it, the genre of artists' book would also have appealed to him. Nolan considered, like many visual artists, whether to turn to writing, creating one artist's book, *Paradise Gardens*. Any artist questions the medium in which they work. To push books to the limits of their ability to contain the output of one's creativity is a valid artistic response. Had White been able to have more control over the production of the books published as "works written by Patrick White," not only presiding over the written text contained in those vessels, he might have produced very different products.

Apart from the Viking jacket for *A Fringe of Leaves*, White was pleased with Viking's artistic efforts in producing jackets for his books, and did not attempt to interfere with the Viking dust-jackets. At that time, however, North America did not have the same sort of colonial attitude towards Australia as did England. White also trusted and valued the artistic sensibility of Ben Huebsch, Viking editor and personal friend. In entering upon a form of artistic collaboration with Nolan, White was wanting to control as much of the object that would be released into Australia as "a Patrick White novel." To what extent the production of visual epigraphs was White's project, in his promotion of the use of Nolan works for the covers of his books is, of course, debateable. It is clear, however, that White wanted to avoid further cover-illustrations of the "Finley-an" variety for his works (fig. 74).

In White's first letter to Nolan, asking Nolan to consider creating an illustration for the cover of *Voss*, he attempts to provide Nolan with an intertextual reference (apart from that of his own novel *Voss*) from which Nolan might draw his style.

White also offers Nolan an event from *Voss*, upon which Nolan might base his cover illustration. Undoubtedly White's motivation was to be helpful, and/or he was excited by the artistic possibilities of his suggestions, but his vision was not to materialise. Unless an innovative publisher or artist can be bothered to manifest his words in an act of reverse ekphrasis (that emulates both the styles of El Greco and Nolan), the suggestion is unlikely to rise from the page into any medium other than that of virtual inter-imagic reading. White wrote:

> [n]o doubt Eyre & Spottiswoode will suggest you read the MS. If you quail before such an undertaking, Chapter 12 contains an incident which I think might be very effective as a subject. In it Palfreyman, a naturalist (in no other way connected with Leichhardt's Gilbert) is murdered by a black. As Palfreyman is by innocence and instinct the essential Christian, I can see his death depicted after Greco's "Burial of the Conde de Orgaz" [(fig. 34)], though in the Sidney Nolan manner, with the members of the expedition lifting up his body, and instead of Greco's heavenly choirs, the detached blacks standing in judgment on a cloud of mist in the background. However, that is just a suggestion. If your imagination responds to the idea of doing a jacket, as I hope it will, you will probably choose to do something quite different.(*Letters* 113)

> Mr Palfreyman was already dead when the members of the expedition arrived at his side and took him up. Nor was there a single survivor who did not feel that part of him had died ... Death had turned him into wax ... The face of Laura Trevelyan, herself waxen amongst the candles, did reproach him for a moment during the orgy of mortality at which they were assisting, but he drove her off, together with the flies ... During the afternoon the leader went in search of the body of the black, which he said they should bury too, but members of the tribe appeared already to have crept up and removed it. So Voss returned, furious with the flies, and the devotion of Laura Trevelyan, which did not allow her to leave him unattended ... [a]nd the Christ-picture. (343-44)

These images from Voss intertext with El Greco's *Burial of Count Orgaz*, 1586 (fig. 34), but Nolan did not choose to inter-image his cover with either El Greco or White's idea for the cover. Marr notes, "[h]e did ['choose to do something quite different']: a thin Voss sent to PW on a postcard, then a disappointing fat Voss for the finished design. But PW told the painter, 28.x.63, 'the jacket in its finished state is, indeed, so much better than I would have got if E. & S. had been left to their own devices'" (*Letters* 113).[24]

Davids and Petrillo suggest that:

> [w]riters, those residents of the fortress [the text block], and editors, their doormen, are frequently hostile even to the idea of

> illustration, much less to images that might carry some content of their own not controlled by the text.(160)

White's dissatisfied responses to Nolan's cover-illustrations, seem to testify to the fact that he wanted ownership over the entirety of the object being called "a Patrick White book," but White was not hostile to images as such. Had he been capable, White would have illustrated the works himself, but he admits that the Nolan-covers were "so much better" than they would have been had the publishers been left to choose images for his books (*Letters* 113). White was aware, then, that even though he did not have what he wanted in a cover, he had been spared the mediocrity of trusting "**[t]he rest [to] the servants, the artisans, the workers, the others**" (Carrión 32).

I would argue that the artist-function that operates as part of a Nolan painting, the characteristic "signature," was important for White. We can only conjecture as to why: because he was an ex-patriate with whom White could identify? because he had "good taste"? because White thought he was a genius? because he and the artist shared similar sensibilities? or because he was an Australian mythographer and White wanted to align himself with such an entity, being himself an iconographer? All these reasons make sense. The notion that White wanted to create more than a novel; that he wanted to create a *livre d'artiste* is also a possible reason as to why he wanted to complement his work with visual art of a high quality. Had he been able, within the confines of an unimaginative publishing world, it is most probable that White would have made even greater use of reproductions of visual artists' works, not only the limited use enabled by having cover-illustrations.

list of written epigraph sources

the original
"The world is filled to suffocating" (Levine 1067).
epigraphs, visual epigraphs, and ekphrasis
"Novelists, unlike poets and historians" (Greene 7).
"[Ekphrasis] must through hearing operate to bring about seeing" (Krieger 7).
"The star wept rose-coloured in the heart of your ears" (*Rimbaud* 121).
Scribbling on art/a myriad threads
"the map of our tracks is a skein" (Day 23).
riders in the chariot
"Once or twice air raids occurred" (*RC* 179).
other covers
"Daguerreotypes and silhouettes" (Eliot 45).
livre d'artiste
"As an audience accustomed to the notion of art-as-text" (Cross 232).

notes

[1] "Paul Brunton, curator of manuscripts for the Mitchell Library in Sydney, believes that White, in the final years of his life devised a literary conundrum worthy of Henry James. Brunton contends that White ensured the survival of only one manuscript, that of his last novel, *Memoirs of Many in One*, and in it embodied a number of sardonic jibes at the academic researchers who would be the only ones to find them ... Reaction to Brunton's theory has been mixed ... [David] Marr is adamant that Paul Brunton is wrong. 'On the evidence he puts forward and with what I know of Patrick, he is wrong. The only reason the manuscript ... has survived was a gesture of Patrick's to raise some money to fight apartheid'" (Fraser 19, 24). The *Memoirs of Many in One* manuscript is held in a safe at the National Library of Australia, Canberra; and only photographed copies are available to scholars. The library refuses to disclose either the amount of money paid to purchase the document, or its current valuation.

[2] The epigraph is taken from "Feuerback, Preface to the Second Edition of *The Essence of Christianity*," page numbers for Feuerback, not provided.

[3] I have reproduced in colour and in black and white, Nolan's *Rimbaud Head*, 1963 (figs. 98 & 99). In the monotone image, a large proportion of the image's vocabulary is missing. I would argue that unless the black and white version has accompanying text to explain the vibrance of its colours, its vocabulary is diminished to such an extent that the black and white version might just as well be the reproduction of the punctuation of a poem, without the reproduction of the words of the poem.

[4] Sidney Nolan, *Head of Rimbaud*, [1938-9] (fig. 179), pencil, oil and Kiwi boot polish on cardboard, 26.9 x 34.3 cm, Heide Park and Art Gallery, page 38 of *SNLL*.

[5] In his essay about artists' books, "The New Art of Making Books," Ulises Carrión makes deliberate use of emboldening and ellipses as a textual device to work against the norms of written text.

[6] Nor is the ability to purchase a work of art at all available to everyone, for many different reasons (mostly financial and social).

[7] The book of Ezekiel intertexts with *Riders in the Chariot*, but also appears in *The Tree of Man*. In the flood encountered by the Parkers, there was, "a hat with a drowned feather, a baby's chamber pot, a Bible open at Ezekiel (*TTM* 74). The book of Ezekiel, in which the prophet Ezekiel sees a valley of dry bones, also intertexts with *The Aunt's Story* which also refers to "certain landscapes in which you can see the bones of the earth" (Ezekiel 37: 1-14; *TAS* 60).

[8] "Many times authors have even attempted to 'hide' the quotation's source because they had used the quotation totally out of its original context. At other times again, they openly exposed the 'out-of-context' quality" (Zelenak 6).

[9] It is difficult to imagine a musical epigraph being a successful epigraph for a written work, especially if that work is presented in the conventional form of a book, unless, in a kitsch sort of way, the devices used in Greeting Cards were to be placed inside books to herald their contents with electronic versions of various musical epigraphs – the Violin Concertos of Berg and Bartok for *Voss*, perhaps, or the symphonies of Mahler? White wrote to Ben Huebsch:

Figure 98 – ***Rimbaud Head***, 1963, oil on board, 60 x 40 in., page 514 of *AA* 5.3 (Dec. 1967), reproduced in monotone.

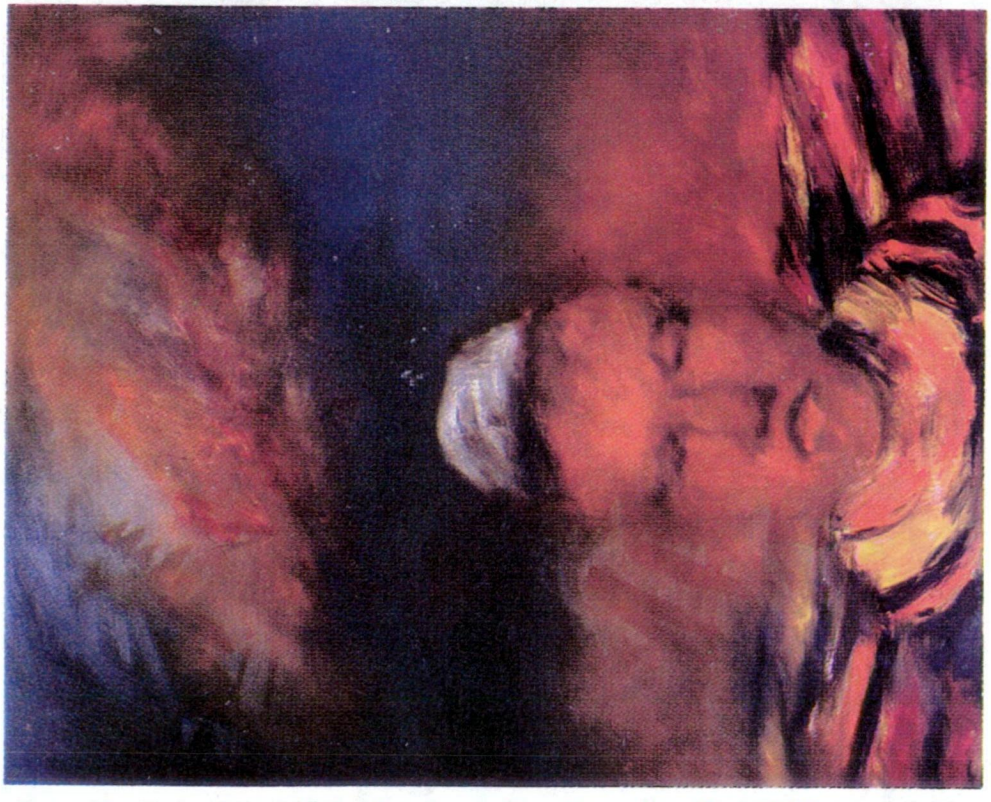


Figure 99 – ***Rimbaud Head***, 1963, oil on board, 60 x 48 in, plate 47 of *SNMI*, reproduced in colour.

> "In the last ten years I think music has taught me a lot about writing ... That may sound pretentious, and I would not know how to go into it *rationally*, but I feel that listening constantly to music helps one to develop a book more logically ... I wanted to give my book the textures of music, the sensuousness of paint, to convey through the theme and characters of *Voss* what Delacroix and Blake might have seen, what Mahler and Liszt might have heard" (*PW* 318).

The rhythm and cadence of musical intertexts apparent to White, however, might never be apprehended by any readers other than those extremely familiar with the music listened to by White (and/or other relevant musical (inter)texts), and sensitive to musical intertextual echoes throughout the written text.

[10] Even though it might be preferable that an author select his/her cover illustration, an epigraph need not have been selected by its author in order to have an epigraphic function. If it is accepted that images might be considered as suitable language for an epigraph, an accidental epigraph might eventuate if a reader can see connections between a cover illustration and a work's content. It is only the fact that publishers do not usually select printed passages of prose or poetry in order to decorate the front covers of books, that "accidental" printed epigraphs do not occur more frequently. Certainly an astute and sensitive editor/publisher might enable the epigraphic function of a cover illustration to operate powerfully if his/her selection of image (or words) for a book's cover is sufficiently connected with a work's content. It is possible for a great deal of manipulation to occur during the final production and marketing of books. Readers alone, however, are capable of reading those connections.

[11] "I prided myself on inventing a poetic language accessible some day to all the senses" (*Rimbaud* 207).

[12] Nolan's *The Sisters*, 1946 is an image of Nolan's two sisters (as small children) set inside the same sort of oval painted frame. This image of innocence (as seen down the barrel of a gun) inter-images the brutality of gun-violence (often towards children) which is part of our society, both in reality and in fiction.

[13] The text written on the bottom of the painting is from Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (104).

[14] Melville is possibly making an ironic ekphrastic depiction of a work by Joseph Mallord William Turner, such as *Snow Storm – Steam Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, 1842 (*Moby Dick* was first published in 1851). Turner legend has it that the painting is a record of the 67 year old artist's experience being lashed for four hours to the mast of a boat in a storm (Honour & Fleming 565). The image is sufficiently ambiguous and wild, however, to fit the difficulty espoused by Melville's narrator in describing the work.

[15] "The Phoenix and the Turtle," l.2 (Alexander, 1344).

[16] In *Borges Sequel*, 1977, an etching published as part of an artist's book, Herel investigates the play between letters of various alphabets, and imaginary hieroglyphs or ciphers. The images play between the boundaries of letters and images. By representing images of alphabet letters over and over again, Jasper Johns effectively forces commentary to concentrate on the components of written text, and the ways in which same subject can be represented and re-represented. Richard S. Field, ed., *Jasper Johns, Prints: 1969-1970*, New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970. See also Magritte, *The Treason of Images*, 1928-29 (fig. 101).

[17] "The book-jacket [in Great Britain] had a humble beginning. It was simply a dust-wrapper which was used by London booksellers to keep their wares free from smut and fog. In our day this English invention has become an integral part of a book" (Rosner, *Growth* VII). Charles Rosner reports dust-jackets as early as 1833, but says that it was not until 1932 "that any serious consideration to the question of book-jacket collecting appeared in print" (*Growth* XII-XIII). "The first International Book-Jacket Exhibition was held in ... London, in 1949" (*Growth* V).

[18] Other instances of rams depicted in trees are: *Composition*, 1958; and *Carcase in Tree*, 1953, 1953.

[19] This image also intertexts with the following lines from *Riders in the Chariot*, "the burnt-out blackberry bushes, lolling and waiting in rusty coils, suggested that the enemy might not have withdrawn. As Miss Hare passed, several barbs of several strands attached themselves to the folds of her skirt, pulling on it, tight, tight, tighter" (7).

[20] In *The Vivisector* a printer speaks to Duffield of the war: "He began to speak of Gallipoli, the blood and bowels of which were soon shimmering with the gentle radiance of a landscape for a rustic picnic; bodies cannoned off bodies in bursts of manly horseplay; the air vibrated with the strong tones of masculine friendship" (400). This passage inter-images with Nolan's series, but the text is ambiguous as to whether it is the printer's words, or Duffield's mind, or both spaces, in which this imagined Gallipoli takes place.

[21] "Although it was warm, even sultry, Mrs Godbold put on her coat, for decency's sake, and for moral support, her black, better hat" (272). "Miss Hare would only moan ... the great wicker hat had gone askew, its spokes burnt black, [but] not even Mrs Godbold dared suggest the wearer should remove it" (432). "Just then two ladies [Mrs Jolley and Mrs Flack], who had come down in second-best hats to enjoy the spectacle, happened to reach the brink of the fire" (424).

[22] "As a title for the volume of stories White took the perfunctory Greek cry, OI KAYMENOI, 'the poor unfortunates' or, literally *The Burnt Ones*. White explained to Huebsch, 'The Greeks come out with this so frequently. It's an expression of formal pity. One realises they aren't prepared to do anything about the objects of their pity because nothing can be done'" (*PW* 432).

[23] Barbara Mobbs in conversation with me, 17-1-1996.

[24] Nolan completed his first book jacket design for the English publisher for *Strangers and Brothers* by C. P. Snow earlier in the same year that *Voss* was published, but had earlier made numerous covers for novels and journals published in Australia.